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HIS LIFE & PUBLIC CAREER

S. H. JEYES

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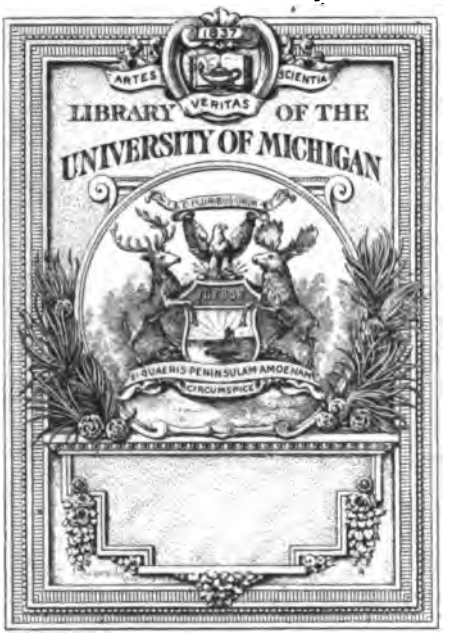

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MR CHAMBERLAIN: HIS LIFE AND PUBLIC CAREER

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MR CHAMBERLAIN

HIS LIFE AND PUBLIC CAREER

122061

BY
S. H. JEYES

SANDS & CO.
LONDON: 11 HENRIETTA STREET, STRAND
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1903

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INTRODUCTION

"Πρὸς τὸ παρὸν αὐτίκα."

If any excuse were required for publishing the biography of a living Statesman it would be found in the fact that, from its outset to its latest development, it has invariably been interesting. Since Mr Chamberlain entered the House of Commons in 1876 he has never stood in the background of the Parliamentary picture. Overshadowed by the historic forms of Disraeli and Gladstone, of Bright and Salisbury, and competing, as it were, with the equally independent, equally anomalous, figures of Randolph Churchill and Parnell, Mr Chamberlain was recognised from the first as a coming man—one who would not be long in coming. Denounced and praised, feared and admired by all Parties in turn, he has also, in less than thirty years, known a period in which he was simultaneously distrusted on both sides, and, by way of compensation, has gone through a great crisis in which he enjoyed the unqualified confidence of practically the whole nation. But hardly had he digested the eulogies which he received from all quarters for his work of conciliation in South Africa than, as if he were weary of general commendation,

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he suddenly started a policy which would at least have the merit of dividing public opinion.

One reason why some of Mr Chamberlain's critics complain that he springs surprises on the country, and others charge him with sheer want of principle, is that they do not realise how absolutely independent he is, and always has been, of any school of political theory. He collects and examines all the accessible facts and probabilities which together make up a "question of the day." On them, and apparently on them alone, he forms his opinion. This he will fortify with such general principles as happen to accord with it. Show him that the *data* were wrong or incomplete, and he will reverse his own judgment. The usual and hitherto approved method among English Statesmen is to start with a set of more or less abstract doctrines, to concentrate attention on the facts that fit into them, and explain away the others. The sound Liberal or the consistent Conservative thinks he has proved his case if he shows that the course which he intends to follow harmonises with the historic axioms of the one Party or the other—as though the government of a Nation were a game of Logic, and the division of Parties corresponded with some eternal Dichotomy in Things. For Mr Chamberlain, neither political philosophy nor philosophical history has any attractions or terrors; and his unaffected indifference has been proved by his career. He has never, apparently, asked himself, on any practical question, "Which is the Liberal, which the Conservative, policy?" What he has wanted to know has been

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whether the Liberals or the Conservatives were, on this or that issue, right or nearer to being right. Thus, in his early days he acted with the Radicals because they were bent on destroying institutions which he regarded as mischievous in practice, and he flouted the official Liberalism of the day because it would not take part in the crusade he was preaching. A few years later he was found working in partnership with the very men whom he had recently denounced, because in the meantime they had adopted several articles in his Programme and towards the others were observing a benevolent form of neutrality. Even more striking is the contrast between his attacks on the Church of England or the House of Lords and his subsequent defence of both. He was eager to disestablish the Church so long as he considered that its privileges were oppressive to the Nonconformists; he is now ready to protect it from aggression because the grievances under which the Dissenters were labouring have, he thinks, approached vanishing point. He scoffed and scolded at the Peers, none more bitterly, when they resisted the extension of the Franchise, because they were perpetuating what seemed to him an injustice. He supported and praised them when they threw out the first Home Rule Bill because he thought that on this occasion they interpreted the true opinion and served the real interests of the country. He had been a Home Ruler himself so long as he believed that the Nationalists would be satisfied with what he regarded as safe and reasonable concessions. He became a Unionist

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when they stretched their demand beyond the limits which he had marked down as impassable.

It is conceivable, though highly improbable, that he might be reconverted to Home Rule if its advocates would reduce their claims to the original proportions, or if some wider scheme could be realised that would not incur the grave perils which he still apprehends. So, too, with regard to pledging the Imperial credit on a large scale for Land Purchase in Ireland, he opposed Mr Gladstone's Bill because it was connected with and meant to facilitate Home Rule. But he supported Mr Balfour's Bill, and was induced, if somewhat reluctantly, to assent to Mr Wyndham's proposals, because they were simply intended to mitigate agrarian discontent. Similarly, he attacked the Imperial policy of Disraeli, not because he sympathised with Non-intervention principles or loved to ensure Peace at any price, but because he believed that the British Government were, in Lord Salisbury's phrase, "backing the wrong horse." He had no faith in the self-reformation of Turkey, while he did cherish hopes of the Greek and other Christian communities in South-Eastern Europe. In order to counteract a foreign policy which he disliked, and promote the domestic legislation to which he was pledged, he associated himself with a Ministry whose misfortunes or mismanagement extinguished, for a time, what came to be known as the Little England school. He acquiesced in, and publicly justified, the retrocession of the Transvaal, and, openly at least, made no protest against the traditional policy of leaving the

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Colonies, so far as possible, to look after themselves. This, again, was an instance of his life-long habit of attending only to the pressing facts of the day and ignoring problems which he does not think ripe for settlement. Twenty years ago the general opinion of English politicians about South Africa was that nothing mattered very much so long as we held the Cape, and that no part of that Sub-Continent was less important than the Transvaal—unless it were Delagoa Bay!

But circumstances alter cases, and they also alter Mr Chamberlain's opinions. Since the time when he was contented—or permitted himself to be identified—with Mr Gladstone's external policy, both Colonial and Foreign, an entirely new situation has arisen. The Protectionism practised by the European Powers and by the United States had always been a hindrance and inconvenience to British enterprise, yet, in one way or another, our manufacturers and traders had generally managed, though with varying success, to hold their best markets—partly through the sufferance of communities which could not altogether dispense with our products. Within the last decade, however, we have had to face something more than subsidised competition. The American policy of High Protection, which has been developed into a science at Washington, and the Commercial Treaties among the Central Powers of the Continent constitute—in effect, if not in purpose—a standing warfare against our industrial position. One way of meeting the difficulty is, as Mr Chamberlain has frequently pointed out during the last fifteen years, to keep our grip on the trade

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with those Dependencies which have not the power of directing fiscal legislation against us, and to develop new markets within our more or less recognised Spheres of Influence.

The other plan—supplementary not alternative—would be to enter into an arrangement with our Self-Governing Colonies under which we might, in the first instance, exercise the right of Retaliation against any country that closed its ports against the trade of the British Empire, and thus induce it to adopt a less exclusive policy. This marked the furthest point to which Mr Chamberlain had, until last May, signified his willingness to proceed. It is true that, in almost every speech which he had made on Imperial Federation, he had spoken of a Customs Union as a vital part of the general scheme, but he had almost ostentatiously refrained from pressing this view either on Great Britain or the Colonies. It was generally regarded as a pious and strictly personal opinion—not intended to bind his colleagues in the Ministry any more than Mr Balfour's equally well-known views about Bimetallism and the establishment of a Roman Catholic University in Ireland.

It was, therefore, with universal astonishment that his speech on Preferential Tariffs at Birmingham on 15th May 1903 was received in the country. Still disclaiming the name of Protectionist, he repudiated that interpretation of Free Trade, which lays down that "our only duty is to buy in the cheapest market without regard to whether we can sell." We must resume the "power of free negotiation and, if necessary, of

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retaliation." This was no abstract declaration. He desired, he said, that a discussion should be opened on this question, and, though the time had not yet come for a settlement, he clearly intimated that this issue would be laid before the people at the next General Election. In spite of this plain speaking, many people still doubted whether Mr Chamberlain had any more serious intention than to divert public attention from Ministers' recent mismanagement of their London Education Bill. He was "dragging a red-herring across the scent," he was "flying a kite," and Reciprocity was only "out for an airing." In an age of fluid opinions and merging creeds, there are still many well-informed and thoughtful persons who honestly believe that no Statesman, not obviously demented, would venture to lay his hand on the ark of Free Trade—even to steady it. Critics who were quite ready to impute any kind of political iniquity to Mr Chamberlain shrank from charging him with what they considered tactical insanity. We should hear no more of Reciprocity, they prophesied, than we were likely to hear of Old Age Pensions!

Mr Chamberlain accepted the omen. Within the week it happened that the question of Old Age Pensions was brought up in Parliament. Quite unexpectedly, he intervened in the Debate, and declared that both his derided policies could be carried out together. The funds to provide for the wants of the aged and deserving poor might be supplied by the Duties levied on foreign imports. He had put his foot forward and evidently did not mean to draw it back.

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Naturally, the Opposition Leaders demanded an explanation. How far did the view put forward by the Colonial Secretary represent the collective opinion of the Cabinet? That is a question which has not yet been answered; but on 28th May Mr Balfour, in the House of Commons, announced a general concurrence with his colleague, while he intimated that the question was not immediate, and laid down that politicians acting together in the same Ministry are not to be debarred from "taking an independent line on subjects which are not part of the momentary policy of the Government." When Mr Chamberlain rose, so far from seeking to minimise his previous declaration, he went further than he had gone before, because he described the practical measures by which he proposed that his policy should be carried out. The first thing would be to get a Mandate from the people of the United Kingdom; the second, to summon a Conference of representatives of the Self-Governing Colonies; the third, to negotiate a satisfactory arrangement under which the Colonies would give us as much as we gave them.

To make his case complete, he indicated the arguments by which he would try to obtain the necessary Mandate. He admitted it would be necessary to tax food, and, for the sake of argument, estimated that three-fourths of the Duty would be paid by the working classes. But the whole of the proceeds should go back to them, and the other quarter be given them as well. They should have Old Age Pensions, they would earn increased wages, and they would be protected against the unfair com-

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petition of goods sold below cost price by the great foreign Trusts and Combinations.

Such is the programme by which Mr Chamberlain has decided to stand or to fall. There can be no going back, nor is there much room for further advance. But it should be pointed out that, however he may have changed his attitude towards other questions, on this subject the opinions that he holds to-day are but the logical development of those which he has long maintained. It is true that in 1881 he declared that a tax on food meant a fall in wages. Obviously, it would involve a decline in the purchasing power of a fixed number of weekly shillings. But it is his contention and belief that a general rise in the price of commodities must be accompanied by an equally general augmentation of wages. This, of course, is one of the propositions which he has promised to establish to the satisfaction of the country. Again, in 1885 he denounced as "quackery" the proposal to encourage agriculture by imposing a duty of five, ten, or even fifteen shillings a quarter on foreign wheat. Though he used similar language on several other occasions, it will be found that he was always opposing a plan for assisting one class in the United Kingdom at the expense of another class. What he is now advocating is, we are told, to benefit all classes together, and all countries alike within the Empire. His arguments may be sound or unsound, his policy may be mischievous or prudent, but he cannot in this respect be charged with serious inconsistency.

It is easy to label a public man who has changed

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sides on more than one question of the day as an Opportunist, a *Realpolitiker*, and to suggest that he has been influenced by ambition, love of applause, self-conceit, or resentment. But in dealing with a contemporary politician it is more mannerly and far safer to abstain from moral judgments—neither imputing the lower motives nor claiming the higher virtues. In the following pages no attempt will be made to go behind the facts and considerations which evidently have operated on Mr Chamberlain's mind, and which explain his conduct at every crisis, whether we accept or repudiate the conclusion at which he has arrived. But in one sense it must be admitted that he always has been, and probably will remain to the end, an Opportunist. What line he will take on any new question, or one which has been materially modified by recent events, it is impossible to conjecture, since, as we have seen, he is guided not at all by abstract principles or political formulas. He applies to Statecraft the rule which the late Lord Russell of Killowen so successfully observed at the Bar—if only you will get up all the facts of a case, it is ten to one you need not trouble yourself about the law. That is why Mr Chamberlain's career, like Mr Gladstone's, has been puzzling to commentators who have been trained in the political philosophy of the Schools, and naturally expect their contemporaries to conform to one or another of the types exemplified by the somewhat abstract figures presented in standard histories of England.

Because Mr Chamberlain is a man of business it is sometimes assumed that his political judgment

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is decided by a mere calculation of the material results to be expected from this or that course of action—what does the Country, or the Party, or the Statesman, stand to gain or lose? As a matter of fact, Mr Chamberlain is, perhaps, the most sentimental, the most emotional, of the leading public men in England. Quick to anger and indignation, he is equally capable of enthusiasm and admiration, and in expressing either kind of feeling he is liable to exceed the ordinary reserve of public life in this country. His attacks and retorts on adversaries in the House of Commons have not been more scornful and exasperating than his criticisms on politicians and publicists in foreign countries who have assailed the interests or the reputation of England. Never has any public man more utterly disregarded the old maxim about treating enemies as if they might one day become friends, and regarding friends as if they might in future turn enemies. Mr Chamberlain, on the contrary, has always been equally warm as ally and antagonist, and, before he starts on a new campaign, makes his advance certain by burning his boats behind him. If he were, as he has often been represented, a cool and scheming politician, playing for the first place in the State, he would have long ago taught himself not to excite those personal animosities in Parliament which would make it impossible for him to manage the House of Commons, and he would have been especially careful not to put himself forward in Europe as the very exemplar of what our candid friends abroad regard as British insolence and aggres-

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siveness. As Leader of the House of Commons, he would have to contend with many personal adversaries who would do their best to wreck all his schemes, while a Government in which he were Prime Minister would have few friends among foreign Statesmen. All this Mr Chamberlain quite understands. But his governing passion, one that no consideration of self-interest or even of public advantage can control, is what may be called a graduated patriotism—devotion to the City which he has helped to construct and adorn, and which has always supported him throughout the vicissitudes of his career; devotion to the Country which he believes to be incomparably the best and finest in the world; devotion to the Empire which he hopes to consolidate, and with which he desires that his name shall be imperishably associated.

Although in domestic affairs Mr Chamberlain's policy has been more or less limited by the circumstances of the day and the probabilities of the immediate future, it will be conceded by those who most sincerely deprecate his action, that in regard to the Colonies he takes long views. The fault charged against him is that he seeks to reach at once what would be more safely regarded as the goal of a distant endeavour—that he wishes to impose as a task for the next Parliament, or the one after, what should be treated as a vision for the optimists of another generation. Whatever may be the verdict of the electors on the issue which he has raised, it is undeniable that this "man with the mayoral mind" has thrown a ray of Idealism on what had long been the most arid

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department of public life in England. The methods he proposes may be abjured by his countrymen, but they will give him credit for developing a noble conception, for bringing back into "practical politics" a project which had been abandoned as hopelessly Utopian by the men who originated it. Whatever may be the judgment of posterity on Mr Chamberlain's work at the Colonial Office, he has rendered it impossible for his successors to acquiesce in the theory laid down, less than twenty years ago, by that capable and accomplished administrator, the late Lord Blachford, that the duty of Downing Street was to secure that the connection between the Mother Country and the Colonies, "while it lasted, should be as profitable to both parties, and the separation, when it should come, as amicable as possible." That paralysing doctrine has been blown away for ever. Other Statesmen may think it prudent to move more slowly, or to move in a different direction, than the Minister who hoped in a few years to reorganise and revivify every part of the British Empire at once—*nil actum credens dum quid superesset agendum.* But none, it is safe to say, will venture to proclaim a creed of temporising dispondency.

Probably it would not be going too far to suggest that Mr Chamberlain, while still a lad in Birmingham, had already formed the purpose of making a name for himself in Parliament. He may have dreamed, perhaps, of attaining even a higher position than he has yet reached. All his studies and most of his amusements, consciously or un-

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consciously, were directed towards public life, and his interest in questions of the day was as keen and controversial when he was speaking on a Motion in the Edgbaston Debating Society as it is when he is called on to justify his policy in the House of Commons. The political activity which was the relaxation of his early manhood did not become drudgery after he had made it the serious business of his life. He is seldom tired, because he is never bored, by public life. Moreover, he has retained his faith in Representative Institutions, and keeps his youthful admiration for the House of Commons as the greatest Free Assembly in the world. It has become the fashion amongst some of those superior amateurs who oblige the country by taking part in public business —and claiming their share in all the good things that may be going—to affect an indulgent contempt for the machinery by which our liberties are maintained. The British Constitution would be very well, we are told, if only there was no House of Commons! This facile cynicism has never touched Mr Chamberlain. He was speaking from his heart when he declared, at a Mansion-House Banquet held on 15th October 1902, that he felt a profound reverence for "the venerable Mother of Parliaments." He never approached it, he said, without a consciousness of apprehension and nervousness.

"To me the House of Commons is (he said) a great and an august personality. No doubt it is composed of very various elements—made up of Parties and sections and individuals—with many of whom I differ, and some of whom I agree with

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you in finding it very difficult to respect; but the House of Commons, in its corporate capacity, towers above them all, and justifies the respect and the affection in which, I believe, it is still regarded. I for one do not object to any criticism of any of the individuals who constitute the House of Commons, and, indeed, I think that I myself have sometimes indulged in that kind of criticism; but I am inclined, with my right honourable friend, Mr Balfour, to resent the attacks which are sometimes made upon the House of Commons as a whole. The House of Commons is, in my opinion, the greatest of human Institutions, and it would not be that if it did not contain some human weaknesses, and among them I am disposed to count a certain over-confidence in its own great resources, which causes it to undertake occasionally more than it can perform. And, perhaps, also, I should add, a want occasionally of a due sense of proportion, which induces it to pay less attention to essentials, and more to trivial details, than would be absolutely wise. I have heard the House of Commons compared to an elephant, which can rend an oak and pick up a pin, and I have sometimes thought that the House of Commons devotes too much time to filling its pin-cushion. But, my Lords and Gentlemen, these are the spots on the sun. If there are defects, they are only the foil to its virtues. The House of Commons, as I understand, is the natural personification of the national qualities that have made us great, of justice and generosity. Its industry is unequalled, its knowledge is almost universal. By its undying love of freedom, coupled as it has been with its deep

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attachment to orderly government, the House of Commons has made us what we are, and has kept for us our place among the nations of the world."

Opinions differ sharply as to Mr Chamberlain's public character and policy, even as to his motives and methods, but there can be no doubt that, like the famous Statesman on whose cardinal policy he has now proposed to make a formidable inroad, he is a "great Member of Parliament."

August 1903.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

THE father of the future Statesman was Mr Joseph Chamberlain, a wholesale boot-and-shoe manufacturer in the City of London, and his mother was the daughter of Mr Henry Harben, and sister of Sir Henry Harben, of Warnham Lodge, in Sussex. The business was carried on in the same premises (36 Milk Street) and under the same name for nearly 150 years. The Chamberlain family are descended from a Daniel Chamberlain, a maltster at Laycock, in Wiltshire, where he died in 1760. His son William set up in business in London as a cordwainer, and became Master of the Cordwainers' Company—a position which was afterwards held by two of his sons and three grandsons, including Mr Joseph Chamberlain, senior. The association of the family with this ancient Company was commemorated in 1896, when the Colonial Secretary received an address in which a graceful reference was made to the old-standing connection; in reply, he spoke with pride of the part his ancestors had taken in the proceedings of the Company, and the interest they

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had felt in upholding its rights and privileges.

Mr Chamberlain's parents were married in 1834. Mr Joseph Chamberlain, the eldest son, was born on 8th July 1836. The second, Mr Richard Chamberlain, died only a few years ago. There are three other brothers living (Arthur, Herbert, and Walter), besides three married sisters. At the time of Joseph Chamberlain's birth, and for some years afterwards, the family lived at 3 Grove Hill Terrace, Camberwell. At the age of eight, the lad was sent to a preparatory school, kept by Miss Pace, at 122 Camberwell Grove, and some of her reminiscences of her distinguished pupil have been recorded by Miss N. Murrell Marris,* in *The Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain, the Man and the Statesman.*

Miss Pace, who died at the age of eighty-six in March of the present year (1903), was often revisited by her old pupil after he had become a distinguished man. According to her recollection, he did not, even as a boy, care much for games; though sociable enough, he was almost too anxious about his lessons, and, on his mother's testimony, had already developed the habit of asking questions which it was not easy to answer.

In 1845 the family removed to 25 Highbury Place, Islington (where they remained for many years), and the eldest son was placed under the charge of the Rev. Arthur Johnson, whom his pupil

* For many of the personal details here given, the writer is indebted to this book, recently published by Messrs Hutchinson & Co. Others are reproduced from his own *Joseph Chamberlain*, published in 1896, by Messrs Bliss, Sands, & Foster.

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remembers as a good scholar and excellent teacher. It was not till he was fourteen years old that the boy was sent to University College School, where he was taught Greek and Latin, but showed most proficiency in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and French—subjects in which he gained prizes. Though he was thought clever by his masters, and showed great earnestness and industry in his work, there is no tradition that he was singled out by the judgment of his contemporaries as destined for future distinction. Indeed, his qualities were not those which appeal to the admiration of schoolboys. Though the serious and somewhat sombre institution in Gower Street was by no means given over to the worship of Muscular Christianity — officially, it recognised neither aspect of that educational deity—it would have been difficult probably for a boy to become a "school hero" unless he distinguished himself in some form of athletic sport, and played an active part in the social life of the place.

Mr Chamberlain has never made any direct attack on the excessive modern devotion to sport and out-door games. Indeed, the other day, in his voyage home from South Africa, he distributed the prizes for the customary matches on board ship, and went so far as to observe, half humorously, that athletics were not altogether without their uses! His life-long abstinence from such pursuits, even from the exercise which many sedentary workers believe to be essential to health, has probably been due less to principle than to inclination. It has always amused him more to work his mind than his body, and, if he sacrificed something by shutting himself from the *cameraderie* of the playing fields, the loss was more than compensated by the

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intellectual start which he gained over many of his contemporaries. There was no time to waste in his school life: he was taken away from Gower Street at the age of sixteen, having only stayed sufficiently long to lay the foundations for self-education in the future, and to form a few friendships that have survived a strenuous and pre-occupied career. But his recollections of his schooldays are by no means unpleasant, and not long ago he paid a visit to Gower Street, and spoke of his early days quite in the accepted style of the typical "Old Boy" who has come down to a School festivity.

He had been invited to unveil on 5th November 1902, a tablet erected to the memory of twelve former pupils of the school who had lost their lives in the South African War. It was, he said, fifty years almost to a day since he last entered that building to receive certain prizes from the Lord Mayor, which with the inscription of the old school motto, still rested on his library shelves and were not the least interesting of the memorials of his boyhood:—

"When that Lord Mayor, long since passed away, spoke to me words of congratulation and encouragement," Mr Chamberlain continued, "I little thought that at a later time I should receive from his eminent successor the highest honour which the City of London is able to give. But although I have got to bridge over half a century in order to recall those long past days, I can still sympathise with the boys who are now repeating my experience at the outset of their careers, which I sincerely hope will be honourable to them, and useful to their country. I can remember many of the incidents of my school life, and I entertain always a most kindly sentiment and regard for

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my old schoolfellows and my old teachers. I can call up to-day, as if it was yesterday, the portly form of Professor Key, most kindly of Head-masters, marching solemnly to call to order a somewhat unruly class. I can recall my dear old friend Professor Cook enforcing his mathematical instruction with the oft-repeated assertion that 'Never in the whole course of his life had he met boys so bad as we were' and that 'to attempt to get into our heads the mysteries of algebra was like firing a cannon-ball into a mountain of mud.' Yet, this terrible comparison did not prevent him from exhibiting on many occasions the greatest pride and delight in the proficiency of his scholars. I remember also Professor Merlet, that quaint and genial Frenchman, endeavouring to instil into our British understandings the beauties of Molière, and, in the excitement of his recital, acting the parts he read as if he had just come from the Française. I remember all this, and more; and I remember my school mates, and rejoice that so many of them have subsequently achieved distinction. There were the late Professor Jevons, Sir Arthur Charles, Sir Ralph Littler, K.C., who is present to-day, Mr Prevost, the Governor of the Bank of England, who is also present, Sir Edwin Lawrence, also present, and my friend and old schoolfellow Sir Michael Foster, one of the most distinguished of our men of science. Although I have in some measure lost touch with your work, yet I could not resist the call which was made upon me, even in the midst of exceptional pressure to come once more amongst you, to show how proud I am that, in a great crisis of our national history, our old school should have done its duty.

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"I think we may all join in thankfulness that at no previous time have our soldiers exhibited more courage, more endurance, more cheerfulness in almost unexampled hardships, that never was a War carried on with greater humanity, with a more complete absence of wilful outrage and unnecessary severity, and that never did the people of this country manifest greater calmness in reverses, less vindictiveness in the hour of victory, and greater tenacity and resolution in the pursuit of the objects which they believed to be right and just. Surely, then, we are glad that in this great drama which we have been enacting our school should have had its part. As the Headmaster has said, it is not a military institution. It cannot appeal to those traditions which, in other cases, stimulate men to seek their share of danger and exertion; but, in spite of that, no small contingent of our old scholars went to the front to share in all respects the hardships of the campaign; and we rejoice to know that they did well—we rejoice in that many of them have been honoured by their King, and won the gratitude of their country. But death has claimed its tribute also—a proportion far too large having perished on the field of battle, or died in other ways for their country. It is to commemorate these men—their heroism and devotion—that to-day we dedicate a tablet upon the walls of the school in which so much of their boyhood was passed. It is good for a school like this to have its traditions of self-sacrifice. This memorial, which I am proud to unveil, is even more a lesson and an example to the living than it is a tribute to the dead. I hope also that it may, as the Headmaster has suggested, afford some consolation to the relatives and friends of those whom we have

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lost to know that their memory will be kept green by their old school, their names enshrined for ever in its annals, and the school itself will always be proud of the record which they have left behind them."

In his time, Mr Chamberlain said, the school had been a good school. The education, so far as it went, was excellent and thorough, and he had many times felt gratitude to it. Incidentally, though without any specially apparent sense of regret, he referred to his lack of an academic training. Possibly he is conscious, as well he may be, that what he has lost in the way of intellectual discipline is more than made up to him by never having had the edge taken from his natural keenness, by having always struck out his own line of thought and never being, more or less, compelled to conform to an average standard. However admirable or exalted may be the *genius loci*, it is difficult for a man to absorb it without giving up something of his own nature.

But though Mr Chamberlain has remained, through his career, vigorously and almost defiantly individual he has never disparaged the influence of the old Universities, while in the establishment and support of similar institutions of a more modern type, at Birmingham especially, he has taken an active part. On this occasion he spoke with approval of the greater liberality shown by the Governments in our Colonies, as well as in Germany and the United States, in bringing the Higher Education within reach of the people. He would like to see the time when, in this country, the higher places in factories, work-shops, and counting-houses should be reserved for men who could show, by their University careers, that they deserved the positions which were offered to them.

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On the other hand, as was natural in a man who has raised himself to the chief places in the State by sheer force of will and intellect, he seems to attach less value to a general elevation of the national average of mental attainment than to giving exceptional talent the best opportunities of development. "What is it," he asked, "that makes a country?" Of course you may say "the general qualities of the people—their resolution, their intelligence, their pertinacity, and many other good qualities! Yes, but that is not all, and it is not the main creative feature of a great nation. The greatness of a nation is made by its greatest men. It is those we want to educate."

This view was more fully expounded in an Address which Mr Chamberlain delivered on 17th January 1901, as Chancellor of the New Birmingham University:—

". . . He thought it was the duty of the nation, it was necessary to the welfare and happiness of the nation, that every child should have the simple means of recreation which even elementary education afforded, and the means of self-improvement; but we should make a great mistake if we thought that as a commercial investment this expenditure was likely to bring a great return. Its return was the general happiness of the nation; but it did not secure our commercial position. He should like to make that perfectly clear, and he would remind them that all history showed that progress, national progress, of every kind depended upon certain individuals rather than upon the mass. Whether they took religion or literature, or political government, or art, or commerce, in all these cases of new ideas, the great steps had been made by individuals of superior quality and genius, who

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had, as it were, dragged the mass of the nation up one step to a higher level. And so it must be in regard to material progress. The position of the nation to-day was due to the efforts of men like Watt, Arkwright, or in our own time to the Armstrongs, the Whitworths, the Kelvins, and the Siemenses. These were the men who, by their discoveries, by their remarkable genius, had produced the ideas upon which others had acted, and which had permeated the whole mass of the nation and the whole of its proceedings. Therefore, what we had to do—and that was their special task and object—was to produce more of these great men. He admitted this might be impossible. It might be said, very likely truly, that genius was born and not made; but this, at least, they could do. They could, at least, multiply tenfold the number of those who were qualified to be the assistants and the interpreters of these men, who could take their ideas and carry them into practical operation, and give to them practical application in connection with the different walks of life to which they must devote themselves. That was the object, that was the task, to which he thought the University of Birmingham must, so far as its distinctive and special work was concerned, deliberately set itself. They had made a little progress, although they were still at the beginning of things."

The Chamberlains were Unitarians, and Unitarians of the stricter order. There are some members of that thoughtful community whose opinions it would be difficult to distinguish from those of Churchmen who do not go to church. They are Agnostics in all but name, and only to be reckoned as Nonconformists because they do not belong to the Establishment. But there

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was none of this doctrinal laxity in the congregations of which Mr Chamberlain's father was a well-known and highly-respected member. When he died at Birmingham in 1874, a tablet was erected at Unity Church, in Upper Street, Islington, to commemorate one who "for more than fifty years was a consistent worshipper in Carter Lane Chapel, City, and afterwards in this Church, and a generous supporter of their connected institutions." There was, perhaps, no body of Nonconformists more eager than the practising Unitarians of this period to assert the essential principles of dissent from Church of England dogma, keener in upholding the claims of Religious Equality, more persistent in the attempt to separate Elementary Education from doctrinal influence. *Le Clericalisme, voilà l'ennemi!*

If with zeal in this direction there was combined a certain narrowness of view, if the assailants of Orthodoxy were not themselves exempt from bigotry, it must be remembered that the attitude of Churchmen at this time—of all but an enlightened minority who had scarcely yet been enabled to make their teaching and example felt in the country at large—was somewhat provocative and contemptuous. Between Church and Chapel a sharp line was drawn—social as well as political. The two factions maintained, in almost every town, a standing controversy, practically unmitigated by personal friendships or even by business relationships. The Church people patronised the orthodox butcher and grocer, nor would the Dissenters buy their meat or sugar except from a Nonconformist brother. In some of the larger villages and smaller towns this sectarian bitterness still exists, but it is gradually passing away,

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and the temporary revival of it, caused by the controversies over the 1902 Education Act, has surprised many tolerant, easy-going Londoners whose memories do not stretch back more than thirty or forty years.

The feud was at its height during Mr Chamberlain's boyhood and early manhood, and he threw himself into the fight with all the ardour of a keen, practical intellect to which the combat was not less attractive than the cause. It has been said of Mr Chamberlain that he works in blinkers—sees everything in front of him, but nothing behind or on either side. With a certain reservation, the verdict is, perhaps, correct. Once he has made up his mind as to the point he wishes to reach, he goes straight at it: he has none of the Academical dubiety, the moral misgiving, which puzzle and annoy the earnest, purblind partisan. Never in his career has Mr Chamberlain been more decided in his opinions, or more energetic in advocating them, than he was when, almost as a lad, he first began to feel an interest in public affairs. For this intellectual certainty and practical vigour he is, of course, chiefly indebted to his natural qualities; but so eminently impressionable and receptive a mind must also have been greatly influenced by his surroundings. These, as we have seen, were those of a prosperous, Nonconformist household in what is sometimes called the Upper Middle Class—a vile phrase, but intelligible.

Mentally, this class was the very antithesis of what is connoted by *bourgeoisie*. Nowhere in the England of the first half of last century was there a brighter alertness of the intellect, or more serious study of the great problems of Life and Thought, than among the cultivated Radicals of

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that era. If the doctrines of Bentham and the two Mills, and other propagators of French Revolutionism, adapted and deodorised for British consumption, were accepted at their face value, if their rotundity served to conceal the inner vacuum, they yet stimulated the interest which they purported to satisfy; they made young men think, and prompted them to live and work for the greater diffusion of happiness among mankind. If they are largely obsolete, it is because they have, in this country at least, accomplished most of their work. They created the demand for Reform, and carried it into effect. We see them simmering to-day, scarcely changed in their type, among peoples whose institutions have developed less rapidly than our own. The passive form of Nihilism is little more than our Philosophic Radicalism translated into Russian; possibly, it would not be more dangerous to the State, or to honest Authority, if it were allowed equal liberty of expression. If we now realise that the teachings that inspired the Liberalism of a generation which has mostly passed away were both one-sided and incomplete, we must also admit that they were instruments of almost unmixed good—which is much the same as saying that they were true for their own time. And they had the pre-eminent merit of being based, not on Sentiment, but purely on Reason, so that they could be—as, in fact, they have been—modified to fit altered circumstances.

There are many good Conservatives, in Parliament and outside it, who, for a considerable number of their thinking years, believed that Monarchy was a useless and expensive anachronism, the House of Lords a relic and stronghold of Feudal

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oppression, and the Church of England an embodiment of Priestcraft. Nor, in changing their practical opinions, have they consciously abandoned the principles from which they had drawn their original inferences. They have simply absorbed a new set of facts. This is very often the explanation of what is called inconsistency in politicians. In some cases, the Statesman moves while the Party stands still; in others, it is the Party that advances and the old Leader who is stationary. It is easy to be cynical about public life; but in modern times, since legislators have become "like bees working in a glass hive," the opprobrium that would be incurred by treachery to one's Party may, as a rule, be trusted to counterbalance the mere inducements of Place. It is as ridiculous for Mr Chamberlain's detractors to suggest that he has changed his views in order to gratify his ambition, as it would be for any panegyrist to argue that his opinions at the present day are identical with those which he maintained when he entered Parliament. No attempt of either sort will be made in these pages, which are intended to be mainly a record of his public career, and an account of the conditions and circumstances in which it has been passed.

At the age of sixteen he began life: his education was then complete, so far as education consists in being taught by schoolmasters. He was put into his father's business in the City, and kept to it for a couple of years, though he managed to find time to attend scientific lectures at the Polytechnic, and amused himself with taking part in private theatricals. He even wrote a farce in one act, and performed in it. But, in 1854, a change took place in his prospects. His family were

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connected by marriage with Mr John Nettlefold, a member of the well-known firm of wood-screw makers at Birmingham. They had purchased the English rights in an American patent for improved machinery, and they determined to reorganise their business on a broader basis, building new works, bringing in more capital, and introducing fresh blood. Mr Chamberlain, senior, obtained an interest in the concern, and the son, then eighteen years old, was sent as his representative in that already rising city. He threw himself into trade with all his energy, and it is stated—nor is it difficult to believe—that the rapid success of the firm was due in no slight degree to his hard work and commercial aptitude. After a period of some anxiety and struggle, Nettlefolds succeeded in turning out a better article at a lower price than their competitors, and in time they acquired almost a monopoly in their line of business. For some years past the trade had been carried on almost at a loss, so severe were the "cutting rates" set up by the double competition of foreign rivals and small firms at home working for a bare subsistence. In order to place affairs on a more remunerative footing, Nettlefolds bought out two of their chief rivals and all the smaller men who were willing to accept a reasonable offer. The others had to look after themselves—it is the way of the business world, as it always will be—until the country turns Socialist. Then, probably, we should try to starve out other nations.

There were ten years (1875-1885) in Mr Chamberlain's life during which he was even more bitterly assailed by Conservatives than by Liberals from 1886 to 1900, and in the former period some of his adversaries did not

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scruple to represent him as having taken the leading part in an organised system of commercial oppression. His firm, of course, made enemies, and its success could not be achieved without doing injury to less enterprising rivals; but when the evidence against Nettlefolds came to be sifted it showed that their behaviour had been somewhat exceptionally liberal. The member of Parliament who had repeated these vague charges was so satisfied of his mistake that, without any menace of legal proceedings, he withdrew them altogether, and added a very handsome apology. An important firm in the same way of business, of very old standing in Birmingham, which had enjoyed every opportunity of knowing the details of the transactions impugned, declared that "Mr Chamberlain's actions were highly beneficial to those connected with the trade, and beneficent to those whose businesses were purchased on such liberal terms; also to those who, like ourselves, remained in the trade, as well as to his own firm." The negotiations, they said, had been conducted in an honourable and courteous manner, and they denounced, as "false and absurd," the report that threats had been made to crush out the smaller makers. Here the question may be left for those who care to investigate it further. Clearly, it should never have been raised, except on direct and unassailable proof. Such foundation as may ever have existed for these imputations against Mr Chamberlain lies in the probability that in these transactions, as in all others, he acted like a man who means to have his own way, and that on this occasion he got it. But this sort of victory has to be paid for. The "other man," not unnaturally, thinks he has been ill-treated,

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and goes through life grumbling over his grievance. It is simpler to attribute one's failures to the sharp practice of a rival than to confess inferiority.

The Birmingham of fifty years ago was a very different place from the present "Capital of the Midlands,"—owning, as it does, some of the finest Municipal libraries and scientific collections in the United Kingdom, the home of a vigorous young University, and constantly visited by the best actors and musicians of the day. For a young man living in lodgings, the evenings, unless he spent them in the vulgar pleasures which are everywhere easy of access, Birmingham, when Mr Chamberlain first took up his residence there, would have been a dull place, though he had many friends and connections, if he had not discovered resources within himself. He was always a reader, and in his evenings he carried on his study of English and French literature, of which he acquired a considerable knowledge, though it must be admitted that his speeches and Magazine articles contain no direct proof of any wide range of subjects. But the same may be said of many other public men (of Lord Salisbury, for instance), whose high cultivation has never been called into question. Mr Chamberlain's speeches and writings have been practically confined to politics, and he seldom or never permits himself the luxury of digression. The influence of his reading is to be seen chiefly in his style, which, without any especial claim to polish or purity, is noticeably free from superfluous ornamentation. The short, vigorous sentences go straight to the mark, and long practice has made him so correct that a faithful *verbatim* report would reveal very few slips in

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grammar, and not many repetitions or loose expressions. This, it may be mentioned, is a quality very rarely attained by English orators, except those who write out their words beforehand, and either learn them by heart or read them off without variation from the prepared text—generally a very ineffective method, especially in the House of Commons, where a speech is expected to bear close relation to the preceding Debate. Even on the platform, an orator who relies entirely on his preparation is apt to be disconcerted by unforeseen incidents or hostile interruptions. Mr Chamberlain, on the other hand, delights in throwing off *impromptu* remarks—a habit which has sometimes got him into serious difficulties—and positively courts interruptions, to which he never fails to make a neat and telling rejoinder. But this readiness has only been acquired by assiduous training, and it is said that his early speeches were as laboriously "got up" as those of orators who never gain the power of improvisation.

He began early. He had not lived long in Birmingham before he established a Club for the working-men employed by his firm, and in the Night School attached to this institution he gave lessons and lectures. At the Sunday School for young men and women connected with the Unitarian community he was a regular teacher, and was first President of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society. His first speech at the Birmingham and Edgbaston Debating Society was delivered against the Motion that "the character and conduct of Oliver Cromwell do not entitle him to the admiration of posterity." Four years later, Miss Marris records, he brought forward, on his own account, a Vote of Censure on a series of speeches in which

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Mr Bright had been expounding the views of his Radical colleagues on Foreign Policy. With the memories of the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny fresh in the minds of his countrymen, Mr Bright insisted that the Empire was large enough—too large—already. The Colonies were a burden on the Mother Country—none of them paid their way except Australia. This was the accepted theory of the Radical Party, nor, to tell the truth, did Conservatives, as a rule, venture to oppose it.

It is interesting, therefore, to find the future Imperialist, at twenty-two years of age, convinced that it was always necessary for a nation to be prepared for self-defence, denying that the Aristocracy had always been responsible for war, and asserting that since 1688 we had been engaged in no foreign struggle not demanded by the People. In this year (1858) he was elected Treasurer of the Debating Society. In 1859 he became Secretary, and asked the Lord-Lieutenant of the County for permission to form from its members a company of Rifle Volunteers. On this request being refused, he wrote to assure his Lordship that the service of a very fine company of men had been lost! In 1861 he became Vice-president of the Society, and President in 1863. The last honour was renewed in 1896, when he delivered a brief Address, in which he recalled humorous recollections of the Society thirty-three years before. It was, he said, "rather a Radical body," and, on an unexpected surplus of £7 being disclosed, it was proposed by the Secretary, and unanimously carried, that the money should be spent in buying a Tory!

In 1863 Mr Chamberlain was already a prosperous and well-known man in Birmingham, with

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an assured future in its commercial and Municipal life. His energy was increased rather than diminished by a bereavement which he experienced in that year. In 1861 he had married Miss Harriet Kenrick, the sister of an intimate friend, Mr William Kenrick (who afterwards married Miss Mary Chamberlain); but the union was dissolved by the death of Mrs Chamberlain, on the birth of her second child (Mr Austen Chamberlain).

These were the days of the Reform agitation in which Mr Bright played so conspicuous a part, and Mr Chamberlain was a regular and enthusiastic, if also a critical, attendant at the Radical meetings. In 1865 the Liberal Association was formed in Birmingham, and Mr Chamberlain was one of the earliest members; but in 1868 (Mr Disraeli's Reform Bill having passed in the meantime) it was reorganised on a new basis, so as to include representatives of the newly enfranchised working-men householders. It was this local body which afterwards developed into the "Caucus." The original plan was for every Ward in Birmingham to elect a Ward Committee, three representatives of which were put on the Executive Committee, and twenty-four on the General Committee—a body which expanded gradually from hundreds to thousands. The real power, therefore, lay in the hands, first, of the Executive Committee, and, when this in turn became unwieldy from size, in those of the Management Committee, which prepared the agenda for the Executive Committee. Gradually, but surely, the guidance of the whole association was absorbed by the very capable and energetic Secretary, Mr Francis Schnadhorst, who ultimately became Chief Manager for the Liberal Party (in which

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capacity he rendered most efficient service), and was afterwards allowed to advise its Leaders on matters of high policy. Here he was venturing on matters he did not understand, and it is no secret that he was largely responsible for Mr Gladstone's famous miscalculation in 1886. But in 1868 he was a comparatively modest and highly useful person. It was due in no slight degree to his excellent arrangements that, at the General Election of that year, all the members for Birmingham were Liberals, though the Conservatives had been reasonably hopeful of capturing one of the three "corners" of the new Constituency. In this contest Mr Chamberlain took an active part, and made frequent platform speeches.

Almost the first use that Mr Gladstone had made of his majority in the new Parliament was to pass through the House of Commons a Bill for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and it was considered advisable to "get up steam in the country" in order to induce the Lords not to reject the Measure. The General Election had been avowedly fought on this issue—the Upper House having rejected in the previous Parliament the Suspensory Bill for preventing fresh appointments being made, and new interests created, in the Irish Church. There was no doubt that the great majority of the Peers were strongly opposed to Mr Gladstone's scheme. On the other hand, it was more or less known that the "very highest influence" was being exercised to avert a conflict between the two Houses. The Radicals, however, were eager for the fray, and Mr Bright was ready to agitate for a root-and-branch reform of the Upper Chamber. He did not care for any "childish tinkering about Life Peerages." The

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Lords must bring themselves on a line with the opinion and necessities of the day, or they might "meet with accidents not pleasant for them to think of." Mr Chamberlain spoke at a great meeting in the Town Hall.

"It is only just," he said, "that those who have to discuss the Bill should have full opportunity of judging what is the national will on this question. When, however, they are in full possession of the conclusion to which the great majority of their fellow-countrymen have come, if they should see fit, in contradiction to those conclusions, to try again at this time—and it will be a final attempt—to stem the tide of popular opinion, the people of Birmingham will have to consider, in the next great meeting within these walls, whether an institution which again blocks the way to progress is entitled to their continuous respect.

"It is scarcely likely that we shall sit tamely by and see our efforts frustrated by the obstinacy or bigotry of one hundred or two hundred persons, however highly placed they may be. The majority in the Commons of 114 represents the wishes of 6,000,000 people. The 60 Peers opposed to them in the Lords represent three things. Some of them represent the oppression of Feudal lords in times gone by, when people were expected to be grateful for being ruled by the Aristocracy. In the second place, some of them represent the great wealth acquired by the possession of land in the vicinity of large towns—*e.g.*, Manchester and Birmingham—which land enriched its proprietors without care or labour on their part. And, lastly, they represent, and very imperfectly too in many cases, the brains, the intelligence, and the acquirements of

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ancestors long since dead, who unfortunately have been unable to transmit to their descendants the talents by which they rose. It was of such men as these that the greatest member of the House of Lords who ever sat in that body, Lord Bacon, related that it was customary to say in his time that they were like potatoes—the best part was underground. One may respect the Peerage very much and have an esteem for certain members of it; but, when it comes to estimating the opinion of one unknown nobleman as equivalent to the opinion of hundreds of thousands of his fellow-subjects, it is an estimate impossible for the people to hold while they retain any vestige of self-respect. It is impossible that the House of Lords will not see in the history of the last few months proof that the House of Commons is in accord with the People. It reminds me of an anecdote of a farmer and his barometer. It was somewhat out of order, and it perpetually stood at 'Set Fair,' though it rained incessantly for three days. But then even the patience of the farmer was exhausted, and he took the barometer and beat it against the steps of his house, and said to it, 'Now won't you believe your own eyes?' All over the country the people have approved Mr Gladstone's Irish policy; yet the Peers are waiting, and their Conservative friends profess themselves dissatisfied. In the words of that great Statesman, Mr Gladstone, after the time has come and the case is proved, action is still to be deferred, though in this case justice deferred is justice denied. I venture to hope that the effect of this and similar meetings will be that the House of Lords will be advised in time, will take counsel of the most intelligent and most able of the Tory Peers, and avert, for this time at

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least, the spectacle of a conflict between the Peers and People."

This was good politics in 1869. It was generally believed at that time, by Conservatives as well as by Liberals, that the House of Lords existed only on sufferance, and that if the trumpet were blown loud enough the garrison must capitulate. The policy of menace has been many times repeated since 1869—by no politician more vigorously than by Mr Chamberlain—and only of late years has it been realised that the practical difficulties in making a fundamental amendment of the British Constitution are as great as, if not greater than, in that of the United States or the French Republic. When put to the proof, the Radicals discovered in 1884-1885 that their only means of carrying their point was getting up a strong current of public opinion against the Peers. In that instance they happened to fail, so the experiment has yet to be tried whether—in cases of a direct issue between Peers and People—the former could be compelled to give way to the latter. In 1869, it must be admitted that the Peers had already exercised what their more cautious supporters had hitherto defined as the limit of their Constitutional powers. They had forced the Prime Minister to dissolve Parliament on the very question on which they had disagreed with him; the country had been consulted, and had given its verdict in favour of the Government policy. It was not, therefore, very likely—at an epoch when Liberalism was conscious of growing strength, and Conservatism scarcely concealed its misgivings—that the Peers would persist, on the main issue at least, in their struggle with the Commons. In getting up Indignation Meetings, therefore, and in

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organising Monster Demonstrations and talking at large about Abolition of the House of Lords, the Radicals were doing useful service to the Gladstone Administration.

The most important epoch in the earlier part of Mr Chamberlain's public career had begun in 1868, when he was elected Chairman of the National Education League, the active and aggressive body which was to play so prominent a part in the conflict that ended two years later in the establishment of Board Schools, side by side with Voluntary Schools, throughout England and Wales. In its beginnings, the League was almost Undenominational. It was the child of the Birmingham Education Society, the first meetings of which had been attended by the late Archbishop Temple, then Headmaster of Rugby, as well as by ministers of almost every Nonconformist community. At that time, however, Dr Temple was considered an advanced Liberal, and his close association with some of the more latitudinarian contributors to *Essays and Reviews* had thrown him somewhat out of touch with average sentiment in the Church of England. Still, the main purpose of the Birmingham Education Society was not yet anti-clerical. Its founders, Mr Chamberlain among them, desired, in the first place, to call attention to the defective provision for Elementary Education, to raise funds for the payment of the school fees for children whose parents could not or would not afford to find the money, and to agitate for these charges being placed on the Rates. Meantime, the Birmingham Education Society did a good deal of work in the way of whipping-up attendance at the National Schools and paying the fees. From this origin sprang the National

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Education League, whose objects were formally defined as to provide school accommodation through the Local Authorities, and to institute and maintain schools by means of Local Rates and Government Grants. Such schools were to be managed by the Local Authorities subject to Government inspection. They were to be free, attendance was to be compulsory, and the teaching was to be unsectarian. Moreover, the education was to be "so graduated that the child of the poorest artisan shall have it in his power to fit himself for any position capable of being obtained by a citizen of the United Kingdom."

To this work (we read) the League had set themselves with a serious conviction of its vital importance, and under a sense of personal responsibility and public duty, and to that work they intended to devote themselves until it should be accomplished, and "the reproach and curse of ignorance wiped away from the land." The rotundity of the language may bring a smile in these less earnest days, but the promoters of the League proved their practical sincerity by opening their purses. Ten of the leading Birmingham manufacturers, including Mr Dixon and Mr Chamberlain, gave £1000 each, and the organisation was very soon established on what may be called a war footing. At a great Conference held in Birmingham, a speech was delivered by Mr Chamberlain, in which he showed that the question was one which especially appealed to working-men. Nor does he seem to have considered it necessary to argue that the benefits which compulsory education would confer on the children would more than counterbalance any hardships inflicted on their parents. He took it for granted that on this text no sermon was required by his fellow-townsmen.

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Probably he would have followed a different line if he had been addressing a rural audience. Though he was already a vehement advocate of unsectarian teaching, and on many occasions has permitted himself to use very strong expressions about the educational claims of the Church of England, he did not commit the cardinal error of ignoring his opponents' case. The following passage from his speech is instructive :—

"I should be the last to deny or depreciate the enormous sacrifices which have been made by many of the Clergy to establish and maintain schools. But I say that on their own confession their motive has been, not the education of the people as a thing which is good in itself, but the maintenance of the doctrines of the Church of England. I say that, even if they had been a great deal more successful than they have really been, it is the worst kind of Conservatism to say that because a thing is good of its kind it shall not be supplanted by something which is better and more complete.

"If Denominational education is to be extended in England, how can you in justice refuse Denominational education in Ireland (*i.e.*, Roman Catholic education)? And then you will have this glorious anomaly in our splendid Constitutional system; you will have the State spending money on mutually destructive objects; and the patient people will be called upon in one breath to swallow the poison and the antidote, and to pay the bill for both!"

There was no doubt that the Government would so far comply with the views of the League as to make education universal and compulsory. On this point the Liberal Party were practically agreed, nor could any serious opposition be offered

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except by those extreme Conservatives, neither numerous nor influential, who objected to anything that would make people "discontented with their station in life." It was understood that, having extended the Franchise, the State must also open the schools. In fact, "we must educate our masters." But it remained to be seen whether Ministers would—from the Radical point of view—be "strong" enough to abolish fees and insist on the teaching being absolutely secular, or, as the phrase ran, unsectarian. On both points the League was urgent, and its leaders omitted no opportunity of placing their opinions before the country and pressing them on the Government. As for "Free Education," that was soon seen to be, for the present at least, quite outside the sphere of practical politics, and, though the League were dissatisfied, they could not reasonably attack Ministers for not adopting a proposal which the House of Commons undoubtedly would have rejected. Nor did the Government propose to establish a uniform system of public elementary schools. Briefly, Mr Forster's Bill supplemented, without seeking to destroy, the Voluntary system. It had not broken down, but it was inadequate. England and Wales, therefore, were divided into a number of School Districts, every Municipal borough and most parishes being treated as separate Districts, and London being made a unit. Where the teaching system already in existence was "sufficient, efficient, and suitable" (by which it was meant that no conscientious objection could be taken to the character of the religious instruction), no interference was contemplated. But in localities where the Voluntary school did not satisfy this triple standard the contemplated Act would be brought into force. The expense

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was to be divided, in approximately equal proportions, between a local Rate, a Parliamentary Grant, and Fees paid by parents. The only concession made under this head to the Radical demands was that in very poor districts the Fees might be remitted when the parents were known to be in indigent circumstances. The Authority in each district to carry out the Act was to be a School Board elected by the ratepayers, which would be empowered either to build and maintain new schools, or assist old ones in which a proper Conscience Clause was observed. Finally, the School Board was required to insist on the attendance of all children within school age.

Education, then, was to be universal and compulsory; in case of necessity, it might even be free. So far the League had little to complain of. While the leaders did not disguise their disappointment at the retention of Fees, they were not prepared (as Mr Chamberlain announced, at a meeting held in the Birmingham Town Hall in March) to declare war on Ministers—or even on Mr Forster individually. "I have great faith," he said, "in the fairness of the Ministry." By this, probably, he meant that judicious pressure applied to Mr Gladstone might result in further concession. Meantime, there could be no harm in denouncing the imperfections of the Bill. "The League," he said, "would far rather the whole Measure were postponed than that half-measures should be thrust upon them, which would satisfy no Party, but delay the proper solution of the matter, perhaps, for another decade."

It was, therefore, with bitter disappointment that the League received Mr Forster's authoritative announcement in Parliament, that the

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Government would not forbid Religious Teaching in the Board Schools. That, he said, would have meant excluding the Bible from Education—a proposal which the overwhelming majority of Englishmen, not to mention Englishwomen, would not tolerate or dream of tolerating. On the other hand, it was provided that no child should be excluded from the full advantages of school because he attended, or abstained from attending, any Sunday School or place of Religious Worship; or should be compelled to learn any Catechism or Religious formulary; or be required to be present at any lesson, instruction, or observance, to which his parents had, on Religious grounds, made objection. "Surely," exclaimed Mr Forster, "the time will come when we shall find out how we can better agree on these matters, when men will find that in the main questions of Religion they agree, and can teach them to their children. Shall we cut off from the future all hopes of such agreement, and may not all those questions which regulate our own conduct in life, and animate our hopes for the future after death, which form for us our standard of Right and Wrong—shall we say that these are wholly to be excluded from our schools? . . . I confess I have still in my veins the blood of my Puritan forefathers, and I wonder to hear descendants of the Puritans now talk of Religion as if it were the property of any class or condition of men. . . . The English people cling to the Bible, and no Measure will be more unpopular than one which declares by Act of Parliament that the Bible shall be excluded from the schools. . . . What do the League want? Wherever the majority are of their views, they can carry them!"

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Mr Forster's words were intended and taken as a direct reply to the Birmingham Radicals. It is equally clear that he was faithfully interpreting the dominant sense of the country, though defying a vigorous and determined Party. Where the advocates of Secular Education were not in a majority—*i.e.* in nine districts out of ten—all children would have to attend instruction that might be disliked by the parents of some. The magnitude of the grievance might be a matter of opinion, but, such as it was, it was not met by Mr Forster, and the League never forgave him. Their claim was expressed with sufficient clearness by Mr Winterbotham in his reply. His language, though strong, was moderate by comparison with the indignant demonstrations of some of the Noncomformist spokesmen. The Bill, he said, would be a curse rather than a blessing — it was an ill-omened messenger of strife and bitterness. He did not desire the downfall of the Church of England. "Though it has been a cruel stepmother to some of us, it is a venerable institution; it has done, and is doing, good work." But what the Radicals demanded was such a system of purely Secular instruction as was provided in the National Schools in Ireland. Religion should be left entirely to the Pastor, the Home, and the Sunday School.

The storm was so violent that further concessions were subsequently announced by the Prime Minister. As the Conscience Clause proposed by Mr Forster was not considered adequate protection, the Religious should be distinctly separated from the Secular instruction, and a time-table should be instituted to prevent the two subjects from overlapping. The Cowper-Temple Clause was

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accepted in Committee, and by this compromise (which was intended to bring peace) every catechism and formulary distinctive of any Denomination was expressly excluded from any school receiving aid from the Rates; the Board schools and the Voluntary schools were placed in two separate classes, and the latter were deprived of any aid from the Rates, though, to compensate them partially for this loss, the proportion which they might receive from the Treasury was raised from one-third to one-half of the total expenditure. Although any School Board was given the right to exclude every form of religious teaching, it was seen that the general rule would be—and in fact it was—that the master would read the Bible and expound it, though without reference to any catechism or creed.

Thus was founded what Lord Salisbury once scoffingly called the School Board Religion. The proposal was equally disliked by extreme men on both sides, but at the moment the fiercer explosion of wrath came from the Nonconformists. They had been thrown overboard, said Mr Richard, whose hostile Amendment was rejected by 421 votes against 60. A memorable scene took place, when Mr Miall threatened Ministers with the withdrawal of Nonconformist support. Mr Gladstone suddenly flamed into wrath: "I hope that my honourable friend," he said, "will not extend that support to the Government one hour longer than he deems it consistent with his sense of duty and right. For God's sake, sir, let him withdraw it the moment he thinks it better for the cause he has at heart that he should do so!" Mr Miall, a highly respected but not very impressive person, was crushed for the time. In the House of Commons, Ministers had things their own way;

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but the defiance thrown out to the League was bitterly resented.

Two years later Mr Chamberlain, speaking at Manchester, complained that for years the Nonconformists had served the Liberal Party as hewers of wood and drawers of water. They had been patient under contemptuous toleration which was very hard to bear. They had accepted every act of justice as a favour, and every instalment of rights as a singular and almost unmerited grace. They had waited for the convenience and the pleasure of the Liberal Party. "But now, when we might fairly expect an accelerated speed, when we might justly demand a larger share of attention and relief, suddenly the great Liberal Party falters and the Liberal Leaders hesitate; under the guidance of a man who boasts his Puritan ancestors while he is indifferent to their principles and to their cause, we see ourselves drifting back into the darkness, when we thought we were emerging into the light of perfect day. Concessions which are made to threats of Irish disaffection, which are wrung from the Government by the terrors of a priesthood which takes its inspiration from a foreign source, are curtly refused to Nonconformist loyalty. While Conservative support is angled for, and clerical opposition is bribed into silence with a great price, we are told to take our support elsewhere by the Leader of a Ministry that we contributed mainly to bring into power."

It would not be consistent, he supposed, with "the pacific habits" of Nonconformists, to break Mr Forster's windows or pull down any Park railings—though these measures had been referred to as "marvellous stimulants to modern States-

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manship." No, but the Nonconformists must withdraw their support at elections from Liberals "until they had learned the Liberal alphabet and could spell the first words of the Liberal creed. The parson and the publican had joined hands; Roman Catholics and Churchmen had embraced; the lion lay down with the lamb, to secure from the School Boards support for Denominational education."

On the next day (24th January 1872), Mr Chamberlain summed up succinctly what the League would be content with—and they would not accept less. The representatives of the rate-payer must have absolute control of all national funds applied to Secular Education; all Grants for this purpose made to Denominational bodies must be withdrawn; Religious Teaching should be relegated to religious bodies, each at its own time and in its own buildings; but if Board Schools were used for such a purpose all Denominations must be treated alike; and similar concessions must be made with regard to the Training Colleges. Nonconformists would not submit to toleration—they insisted on equality.

Though Mr Chamberlain had opposed Mr Forster's Bill before it became law, and denounced it afterwards, he took an active part in administering it. He was one of the six Radical members of the first Birmingham School Board, the others being Mr George Dixon (President of the League), Mr R. W. Dale, Mr J. S. Wright, Mr George Dawson, and Mr Charles Vince. This minority of "stalwart" Radicals waged unrelenting warfare against the policy of the majority, and, it would seem, against the spirit, if not against the letter, of the Act. After three years' incessant struggle, Mr Dixon's and Mr Chamberlain's group were

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reinforced by the election of Mr Jesse Collings and Miss Sturge. On the School Board, as on the Town Council, the Progressive party in Birmingham were now installed in power, and took every possible advantage of their position to promote the cause for which they were agitating on every platform where they could get a hearing.

Locally, their success was beyond question, but it may be doubted whether the Nonconformists were well advised in organising a campaign of vengeance against a Liberal Government which had made them the utmost concessions that the country was ready to sanction. It is true that in 1874 they punished Mr Gladstone and Mr Forster for "betraying" the cause of Religious Equality; but the only result was that Mr Disraeli came into office, and held it until 1880, and that Mr Gladstone never, in any of his three future Administrations, found an opportunity of making the reparation which they considered their due, and which he would, perhaps, have conceded, if his lease of power had been extended in 1874. It is true that Mr Forster would have resisted any interference with the settlement of 1870, and that Mr Gladstone had apparently nailed his colours to the mast. But Mr Forster might be thrown over, and Mr Gladstone would easily have found an honourable excuse for a practical surrender. At this time (1869-1873) the Nonconformists made the mistake, Mr Chamberlain among them, of driving Mr Gladstone too hard. On questions of policy and expediency he was pliable —even on matters of principle his enemies said that he was, at least, open to argument—but when his personal authority had been challenged there is no recorded instance of his having given

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way. Mr Chamberlain, as we shall see, already had some appreciation of this quality in the great popular Statesman. In his later electioneering speeches, when the general issue between the Liberals and Conservatives was laid before the country, he refused to take up an attitude of definite hostility towards the Liberals, or even towards official Liberalism; but till nearly the end of Mr Gladstone's First Administration he had been a prime leader in organised rebellion. The malcontents did not, indeed, wish to depose Mr Gladstone, but they did mean either to convince or coerce him into shedding his Whig associations, and coming before the country as a Radical pure and simple. How far they succeeded, and wherein they failed, will be seen hereafter.

Meantime, Mr Chamberlain, though his eye had from the first been directed to the House of Commons, devoted himself, with singular prudence to consolidating his local influence. His work on the Birmingham School Board in association with Mr George Dixon, his connection with Mr Schnadhorst in creating and working the "Caucus," his platform speeches in the Midlands, and occasionally in Scotland and other districts remote from the Midland Capital—all this was polemical and controversial. If it made friends and admirers, it also made enemies and detractors. He was, it is true, becoming a well-known man outside his own neighbourhood, but it is hardly too much to say that he was, at this time, very generally hated—by moderate Liberals as well as by old-fashioned Conservatives. If he had relied simply on his political record, his entry into Parliament might have been delayed, and even when he had been returned his claims to

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Office might not have been so promptly recognised as they were.

Like a careful strategist, Mr Chamberlain, therefore, strengthened himself at the base, and throughout his career has kept his communications unassailable. No matter how widely his popularity in Parliament, or in the country at large, has fluctuated, he has always found Birmingham true to him, and he has always been true to Birmingham. Yet from the first the Conservatives in that city have been a strong and active body, and the sharpest attacks upon him, those that were not merely personal, have emanated from his fellow-townsmen. The foundations of his enduring local power were laid, not by his success in political contests, but by his excellent work as a Municipal administrator. His connection with the locality was already established by the ever-extending ramifications of a highly prosperous business; it may have been strengthened, perhaps, by his marriage, in 1869, to his second wife, Miss Florence Kenrick, a cousin of the lady who had died in 1867. His activity on the School Board, his frequent appearances on the platform, his growing reputation as a speaker among a population whom Mr Bright had taught to appreciate good oratory, and the munificent gifts of himself and his nearest associates to objects of general utility, had marked him out for civic office. In 1873 he was elected Mayor, and the honour was repeated in 1874 and 1875. So dominant had his influence become, that on the last occasion it was good-humouredly complained by an opponent, that he was "not only Mayor but Town Council also." Birmingham had long been a rapidly increasing city — indeed it had somewhat outgrown its methods of Self-Government. Mr

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Chamberlain, in close co-operation with Mr Jesse Collings, inaugurated, and carried out, on a small scale, what has been described as "a policy of State Socialism."

"Fifty years ago," he has said in a review of his own work, "the population of the town was 180,000, or about 40 per cent. of what it is now. The rateable value was less than one-third of what it is at present. In those days, there were, with the exception of the Town Hall and Market Hall, no public edifices of any magnitude or importance. There were no Parks, there were no Free Libraries, there were no Baths; there was no Art Gallery or Art Museum; there were no Board Schools; there was no School of Art, no Midland Institute, no Mason College; there was no Corporation Street. The great area which is covered by that thoroughfare, and the streets depending upon it, was one of the worst districts in the town, both socially and considered from a sanitary point of view. In fact, at the period of which I am speaking, the era of street improvements had not begun. The streets themselves were badly paved; they were imperfectly lighted, they were only partially drained. The foot-walks were worse than the streets. You had to proceed either in several inches of mud, or in favoured localities you might go upon cobble-stones, on which it was a penance to walk. The gas and the water belonged to private monopolies. Gas was supplied at an average rate of about 5s. per 1000 cubic feet. The water was supplied by the Company on three days in the week; on other days you must either go without, or you must take advantage of the perambulating carts which went round the town, and which supplied water from polluted wells at 10s. the thousand gallons. You will not be surprised, under these circum-

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stances, to know that, in 1848, the annual mortality of Birmingham was thirty in the thousand; now it is twenty in the thousand. The only wonder is that it was not much greater; because we read of whole streets from which typhus and scarlet fever, and diphtheria and diarrhœa in its worst forms, were never absent. We read of thousands of courts which were not paved, which were not drained, which were covered with pools of stagnant filth, and in which the ash-pits and the middens were in a state of indescribable nastiness. The sewerage of the town was very partial; and, in fact, to sum up the description, it may truly be said that, when this Society was born, Birmingham, although it was no worse than any of the other great cities of the United Kingdom, was a town in which scarcely anything had been done, either for the instruction, or for the health, or for the recreation, or for the comfort, or for the convenience, of the artisan population."

Early in his first year's tenure of the civic Chair, Mr Chamberlain admitted—or boasted rather—that he was inclined to "magnify his office." He wished to increase the duties and responsibilities of the Local Authority, which ought to be "a local Parliament, supreme in its special jurisdiction." In embarking upon the schemes of Municipal Reform which he was about to urge on his colleagues, he was aware that the patronage and influence of the Council would be enormously increased. Already he had in mind the extension of Local Self-Government, not merely as an abstract doctrine, but as an item in a practical programme that would be promoted by the example of his own Town Council. He began with a scheme for buying up the two Companies which were supplying Birmingham with Gas, and the outlay involved

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no less a sum than £2,000,000 sterling. We should not be startled by these figures nowadays, but a generation ago it was, what Mr Chamberlain called it, "a momentous proposition." There was no great risk in the undertaking (as the result showed), and the Council agreed to the Mayor's plan by 54 votes against 2. There was more difference of opinion at the ratepayers' meeting which was called to ratify or repudiate the action of the Corporation. Asked whether he would himself give the price which the Corporation had been asked to pay, Mr Chamberlain replied that if that body would conclude the purchase, and farm the business out to him, he would pay them £20,000 a year for the privilege, and at the end of fourteen years he would realise a snug little fortune of £180,000 or £200,000. In the end, the proposal was approved by a majority of nearly three to one. Within a few years two reductions had been made in the charge to consumers, and a yearly profit had been gained in addition, which worked out between £40,000 and £50,000 a year.

The municipalisation of the Gas business was followed by the acquisition of the Water Supply. A considerable part of the population had to rely on wells, and many of these were so unsanitary that the Council would soon have to close them. This would mean extra profit to the Companies. Why not buy them out before the action of the Corporation should increase the value of their property? The Companies, of course, opened their mouths wide, and, to compel them to sell at a reasonable price, it was necessary to get a Bill through Parliament. Mr Chamberlain's view was that they should not be allowed to reckon, in the price to be given, such

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future profits as might be due to the increase of the town. These, he argued, belonged to the ratepayers. For the Companies to claim them was to demand "unearned increment." The Corporation, he said, did not wish to make a profit, only to increase the comfort and promote the health of the town. When the Bill passed, and the authorities got to work, it was soon found that an abundant supply of good water could be provided (though it has since had to be supplemented from Wales), and that the charge could be reduced. At first some discontent was caused by closing the old wells, but the benefits of the scheme were generally recognised, and the example of Birmingham was frequently quoted by Progressive spirits in other ambitious Municipalities.

A still bolder adventure was the clearance of the slum district in the very centre of the town, and the construction of what is now Corporation Street on the site. To carry out this public improvement, a sum of £1,600,000 must be raised, and, before the Statutory powers had been obtained, no public money was available for the purchase of land that might come into the market. For this purpose, Mr Chamberlain advanced £10,000, and his example was followed by a number of his fellow-citizens. In due course the Corporation was enabled to take advantage of Cross's Act, and the whole area was laid out, and let on building leases that will fall in about the middle of the present century, when the city of Birmingham will become the possessor of a highly valuable property.

This, undoubtedly, was good business, but, in this undertaking Mr Chamberlain and his associates, not for the first time, manifested

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traces of that innovating philanthropy which is always liable to be suspected as "dangerous" and "savouring of Socialism." Yet there was nothing exceptionable in any of the sentiments which he expressed. In proposing to clear away the rookeries, he dwelt on the unwholesome condition of the area, and the misery of the inhabitants :—

"We want to make these people healthier and better; I want to make them happier also. Let us consider for a moment the forlorn and desolate lives the best of these people must live, in courts like those described. It made my heart bleed when I heard the descriptions, of Mr White and others, of the dreariness—the intense dreariness—and the lack of everything which would add interest or pleasure to the life which obtains among that class. . . . I know for a fact that there are people there almost as ignorant of what is going on around them as if they lived in a lonely and savage island. . . . Some would even lose themselves in New Street. There are people who do not know that there is an existence on the other side of the Town Hall; people who are as ignorant of all that goes to make the pleasure, the interest, the activity, and the merit of our lives, as if they were savages in Ceylon, instead of being Englishmen and Englishwomen in the Nineteenth Century, enjoying all the blessings of civilisation."

Brought up in those dreary and filthy surroundings, surrounded by noxious influences of every kind, what was likely to be their conduct? It was said that the position of these people was their own fault! "Yes, it is legally their fault" (Mr Chamberlain went on), "and when they steal we send them to gaol, and when they commit murder we hang them. But if the

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members of this Council had been placed under similar conditions—if from infancy we had grown up in the same way—does any one of us believe that we would have run no risk of the gaoler or the hangman? For my own part, I have not sufficient confidence in my own inherent goodness to believe that anything can make headway against such frightful conditions as I have described. The fact is, that it is no more the fault of these people that they are vicious and intemperate, than that they are stunted, deformed, debilitated, and diseased. The one is due to the physical atmosphere—the moral atmosphere as necessarily and as surely produces the other."

Commonplaces in 1903! But thirty, even twenty, years ago, when the Poor Law was held to cover the State's duty to the People, they were dreaded and denounced by conscientious and kindly persons who honestly believed that they were acting for the best when they resisted every proposal that could be regarded as "unsettling." The Birmingham Town Council were less timid. It was resolved to use the powers conferred by Cross's Act (philanthropically stretched, with the approval of the author, beyond its original scope), and made themselves the proprietors of forty acres of freehold land within the city. There is, however, one objection to improvements of this kind, which is apt to be overlooked by those who promote them. The site is cleared: poverty and vice are banished from the scene. But what becomes of the dispossessed persons? They are not reformed; for they are not provided for. They simply migrate to the nearest slum, and, if possible, intensify the congestion and increase the sum of local wretchedness.

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Moreover, it is undoubtedly true that, while Chancellors of the Exchequer have been labouring year by year to reduce the collective liability of the nation, the civic authorities have been still more rapidly increasing the local debts. In some instances they have even embarked on purely speculative undertakings, and entered into competition with private firms and commercial companies. This is clearly an unwarrantable method of employing money raised by a compulsory levy, even when it has been sanctioned by a strong majority of the ratepayers' representatives—as, in most cases, it has been. It is not always easy to draw the line between what a Municipality should attempt, and what it should abstain from. Mr Chamberlain—who was regarded at one time as a daring innovator—afterwards laid down the rule that Municipal activity should be limited to those things which the community can do better than the private individual. The main drainage and sewering of a town can only be properly undertaken by representatives of the whole town: it cannot safely be left to individual citizens; whenever there is need of concerted action, or where a monopoly of any kind has been set up, Municipal control should be invoked.

The authors of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835—Mr Chamberlain wrote in *The New Review* in 1894 — did not realise the future development of the system they had initiated. All they intended was to reorganise the Municipal administration of finance, judicature, and police. The powers of the Corporation were not greatly enlarged—what was done was to establish a popular Constituency, and to make the Administration strictly responsible to it. The additional

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powers which had since been acquired by Local Authorities were conferred by degrees, so that Parliament might relieve itself of tasks too multifarious for its control by remitting local matters more and more to local administrators.

A modern Corporation is expected to control police and maintain public order; to supervise, if not to undertake, the sewerage, drainage, and lighting of the town; to be responsible for precautions against fire and for sanitary inspection; to regulate the condition of the streets, and, perhaps, to construct docks, wharfs, and bridges; to provide hospitals for infectious diseases, and lunatic asylums; it may establish public baths and washhouses, lay out parks and recreation grounds, and found libraries, museums, and picture galleries. It is appointed to watch over the administration of certain Acts of Parliament, and to assist in the administration of charities, and, as we have seen, it may be empowered to acquire certain monopolies for public purposes, such as the supply of gas, electricity, and water, and the management of tramways. The complexity of our system of Local Government has been greatly increased by the erection of County Councils, District Councils, and also by the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903, which, by the abolition of School Boards, have considerably added to the responsibilities of the County Councils and the County Borough Councils.

When Mr Chamberlain was a local administrator in Birmingham (he did not quite sever his connection with the Town Council till 1880), and even when he commented on Local Government in the Magazine article just summarised, the duties of a Municipal politician were comparatively light and simple, and it is largely to the

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example of Birmingham and Mr Chamberlain's personal initiative that the movement of recent years owes its origin. Though he did not discover the idea—it is as old as the British Constitution — undoubtedly he gave a powerful impetus to its development.

Yet he was not unaware of certain dangers that may attend the exercise of almost undefined powers by a body not answerable to the general opinion of the whole country. He has been strongly opposed to what he considers the exorbitant claims of the Progressives in the London County Council, and in 1894 he threw out hints that its power should be clipped by creating a number of Metropolitan Boroughs and assigning to each some of the functions then vested in the central body. Quite as strongly as the most old-fashioned Conservative, he disliked the idea of a London Council attaining such powers as would make it a sort of rival to the Imperial Parliament. As he said, success in Local Government depends upon effective decentralisation, and there can be no decentralisation when a single body has to look after the affairs of 5,000,000 persons—the population of an entire State.

Mr Chamberlain has always been a careful student of Republican Institutions; in his younger days, perhaps, as a somewhat ardent admirer; afterwards, when he had been brought into closer personal contact, as a favourable but discriminating observer. What he saw with his own eyes on his visits to America convinced him that, if we are to avoid the corruption which, though far from universal, is by no means rare in the United States, we must not allow Municipal posts to be made the rewards of political service,

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and must especially beware of the system under which the tenure of administrative officials is terminated by the fall of the Party that gave them their appointments. The average expenditure on Local Government in the United States was, he calculated, four or five times as heavy as in the United Kingdom. Having gained their places by corruption, or something very like it, and knowing that their salaries will come to an end with the next turn in the Party machine, the officials, naturally, make hay while the sun shines. That is to say, they recoup themselves by extortion for what they have spent on bribery. If we are to have honest and efficient administration, public officers must be paid reasonable salaries, and be guaranteed in their positions so long as they discharge the duties efficiently.

The limitations on Local Government which were to be recommended to Mr Chamberlain's mind by subsequent and wider experience had not, perhaps, been very scrupulously observed by the Town Council of Birmingham, when he was its Mayor and, as people said, its Dictator. But the movement was then young and its leaders—who thought that the eye of the whole country was upon them—were, naturally, enthusiasts. The Birmingham Progressives did seek to make the Council a local Parliament; did treat Statutory restrictions as obstacles to be broken down or circumvented; and, to a certain extent, though in no very gross manner, they did give appointments to men who had helped them in Municipal contests. On the other hand, they did not confine their patronage to their partisans, nor was it ever charged against them that they parted with a good servant because he was not "sound" in politics. Looked

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at from a distance, and without political favour or prejudice, the administration of public affairs at Birmingham was during these years—as it has been since—a wonderful example of civic enterprise and efficiency. Nor can it be denied that, though others worked quite as hard, the impetus and initiative were, in the main, supplied by the Mayor. He startled a good many steady-going citizens by his bold schemes, but they had to admit, when the various proposals had been got fairly into working order, that he never led the Corporation into making a bad bargain, and that every benefit which he had promised was in due course realised. The result was that, when he laid down office at the end of his third year, he was, if not personally the most popular, undoubtedly the most influential, citizen of Birmingham.

Nothing annoys him less—though he is unduly sensitive to personal attacks—than the taunt that he has a "Mayoral mind." He knows very well that those three years of Municipal office, followed as they have been by nearly thirty years of political devotion to the town and neighbourhood, have given him a position distinct from that of any other Statesman—almost as powerful as that of a great territorial magnate in the days before the Reform Act. The Constituencies around Birmingham are not Mr Chamberlain's pocket-boroughs, nor are the electors in that area men who will be driven. But they can be led by a man whom they trust and admire. If there is equal intelligence in the Metropolitan Divisions, and equal shrewdness in the Scottish and North of England Constituencies, there is more political enthusiasm in the Midlands than in any part of Great Britain. The basis of Mr

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Chamberlain's ascendancy was, as we have seen, established in the days when he was looking after the gas and water and laying out the new streets of Birmingham. "I will confess to you," he said in 1880, "that I am so parochially minded that I look with greater satisfaction to our annexation of the gas and water, to our scientific frontier in the Improvement Area, than I do to the result of that Imperial policy which has given us Cyprus and the Transvaal; and I am prouder of having been engaged with you in warring against ignorance, and disease, and crime, in Birmingham, than if I had been author of the Zulu War, or had instigated the invasion of Afghanistan."

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CHAPTER II

FROM FREE LANCE TO MINISTER

THOUGH Mr Chamberlain has laid down that an energetic Mayor has little time for other duties, he found plenty of leisure during his term of office for political agitation. His bitter resentment of the treatment of the Nonconformists in the Education Act of 1870 has already been described, and he was known chiefly for his uncompromising hostility to official Liberalism. In other respects also, he represented the extreme section of the Radical party. In theory he was, no doubt, a Republican—as in those days most of the Advanced Radicals were. His views were expressed with sufficient candour at the end of 1872, when he was proposing the Queen's health at a dinner in Birmingham :—

"I have been taxed with professing Republicanism. I hold, and very few intelligent men do not now hold, that the best form of Government for a free and enlightened people is that of a Republic, and that is a form of Government to which the nations of Europe are surely and not very slowly tending. But, at the same time, I am not at all prepared to enter into an agitation in order to upset the existing state of things, to destroy Monarchy, and to change the name of the titular Ruler of this country. I do not consider that name a matter of the slightest importance.

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What is of real importance is the spread of a real Republican spirit among the people. The idea, to my mind, that underlies Republicanism is this: that in all cases merit should have a fair chance, that it should not be handicapped in the race by any accident of birth or privilege; that all men should have equal rights before the Law, equal chances of serving their country." In honouring the toast which he proposed, the company would be honouring the popular authority, the popular will, and the supremacy of Law and Order represented by the Head of the State, and they were also honouring the personal virtues of the distinguished Lady who then occupied the Throne, and had endeared herself to the hearts of her People. Never, he said, either in public or private, had he advocated Republicanism for this country. "We may be tending in that direction, but I hold the time has not yet arrived, if it ever does arrive, and I hold also that Radicals and Liberals have quite enough practical reforms to strive after, without wasting their time on what seems to me a very remote speculation."

What this amounts to is that in the abstract the speaker would have preferred a Republican system to a Monarchy — a sentiment that a courtier might avow to a King. But it must be admitted that Mr Chamberlain had lent some colour to the imputation of Republican sentiment. At an Electoral Reform Congress, held the previous month in London, he had been described as the Delegate from a Birmingham Republican Club, as well as from the Birmingham Liberal Association and the Central Nonconformist Association. But his attendance, as he afterwards explained, had been on behalf

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of the Liberal Association: he had not been a member of the Republican Club, and the proposal that he should appear as its Delegate had been made without his knowledge. A still earlier incident, however, has often been brought up against him. On the fall of the Third Empire, he publicly congratulated the French Republicans on having got rid of a system "founded on murder and continued in fraud," which had "perished in corruption." Yet the sting of this declaration was, at least, modified by the addition that there was "really no practical difference between a free Constitutional Monarchy, such as ours, and a free Republic. Nevertheless, it was an ill-advised utterance, for the methods by which the throne of Napoleon III. had just been upset were far more cruel, and hardly more honest, than those by which it had been established and maintained. Many crimes in history have been more or less whitewashed, but a plausible vindication of the French Commune has yet to be written. To ordinary Englishmen the name was *anathema*, and still is. But at this time, and for some years afterwards, Mr Chamberlain, as youthful in mind as in appearance, delighted in shocking the sentiment of average men, and sometimes seems to have deliberately set himself to make their flesh creep. In 1874, again, he almost claimed the name of Communist, though he admitted that events in Paris had lent it an ugly connotation. But the leaders of the Commune, he declared at a civic festivity, had fought for the same principles of Self-Government as themselves.

It was not surprising, therefore, that some misgivings should be expressed when it became his duty, in that year, as Mayor of Birmingham,

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to give an official welcome to the Prince of Wales, who was visiting the town to open the new Municipal buildings. How would Mr Chamberlain square what were supposed to be his Republican principles with paying loyal respect to the Heir to the Throne? The theme was tempting to the comic journals; but when the ceremony was over it was generally admitted that the Mayor had discharged his task with grace and tact. He even expressed the opinion that the Royal visit would "draw closer the ties between the Throne and the People," and increase the popularity of the members of the Royal House—a popularity which was based quite as much on their hearty sympathy and frank appreciation of the wishes of the nation as on their high position and exalted rank.

It will be seen, then, though Mr Chamberlain shared the prevailing views of the Radicals of that time—that the Church of England, the House of Lords, and the Monarchy, were alike doomed institutions—his chief purpose was to promote such social reforms as he believed would increase the comfort and happiness of the people. His practical creed was expounded (in a series of articles in the *Fortnightly Review*), and summed up as Free Labour, Free Land, Free Church, and Free Schools. He believed that the artisans, enfranchised in 1867, would demand, and be right in demanding, a greater share in the rewards of industry, something more than bare wages; that the Land Laws must be so modified, by the abolition of the rules as to primogeniture and entail, that small properties should be made easy and cheap in transfer, while the cultivator should have his property recognised in "unexhausted improvements"; that the Church should be disestablished; that Education, having been made compulsory,

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should be given without any kind of payment from the parents of those who received it. If the Liberals would unite on this programme, they would satisfy the "just expectations" of Labour, and conciliate the Nonconformists who had been "driven into rebellion." On any other terms, he believed, the Liberals would stand no chance of success at the coming General Election.

He acted on his opinions. The General Election was held in January 1874, and he was invited to stand at Sheffield as an Advanced Liberal against Mr Roebuck, a veteran Liberal who had not quite kept up even with the Party Leaders whom Mr Chamberlain regarded as laggards. The experiment was not encouraging. He was beaten by a thousand votes, though not convinced of error. Indeed, the result of the General Election, when Mr Disraeli took office with a majority of fifty-two, was a strong argument that the official Liberal Programme had been insufficient. In the Autumn, Mr Chamberlain developed and strengthened his contention in another article (*Fortnightly Review*, October), called "The Next Page of the Liberal Programme," which gave deep umbrage to the Whigs, while it afforded the exulting Tories a convenient illustration of the dangerous measures which would be the logical result of Liberal principles. Denounced as he was on every Conservative platform, Mr Chamberlain became almost a favourite with his adversaries: his speeches and his articles provided very useful missiles for pelting Mr Gladstone.

In 1874, Mr Chamberlain retired from business with an ample fortune, and in the following year he suffered the misfortune of losing his second wife. He was not, however, a man either to live in

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opulent idleness or brood over a personal sorrow. He did, indeed, tender his resignation of the office of Mayor, as he would not be able to discharge the social duties of the post, but the offer was not accepted by the Corporation, who undertook to relieve him of the ceremonial functions if he would consent to carry on "the Parliamentary business to which the Borough stood committed."

After a brief absence in the South of France Mr Chamberlain returned to Birmingham, and threw himself, with increased energy, into politics. From that time, almost to the present, he has lived in an incessant whirl of controversy, attacking the policy of others, and defending his own, giving hard knocks and getting them back, but never wearied or worried with the perpetual strife, and always ready to renew the combat. It must have been almost a disappointment to him that he should be returned for the first time to the House of Commons without a contest. On the retirement of his friend and leader on the National Education League, Mr George Dixon, in June 1876, he was elected to the vacant seat in Birmingham without opposition, having resigned the Mayoralty and Chairmanship of the School Board. But his connection with civic administration was not terminated till 1880 (when he took office in Mr Gladstone's Administration). It was something of a wrench, he admitted, to withdraw from the position of Chief Magistrate in his adopted town. "Local Government," he said in his first address to his constituents, "is increasing in importance, and Imperial is diminishing." Nor was that a time, in his opinion, when following the fortunes of the Liberal Party in Parliament was likely to bring opportunities of personal distinction. His animosity to the Church of England as an

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established institution was unabated, though he had never questioned its religious value or the personal worth of those who preached its doctrines. But union between Church and State meant separation between Church and People. One reason why working-men did not go to Church was that they saw in it an opponent of the political reforms which they desired. As for the practical programme which he would advocate, it included better representation of the people, promotion of Temperance, and removal of the great causes of social discord and the obstacles to political progress. England was said to be the Paradise of the rich; let it not become the Purgatory of the poor! But these reforms, fundamental as they were, must only be pursued by Constitutional methods. While he regretted that personal bitterness should be mixed up in political controversy, no fear of obloquy would cause him to abate his convictions, or moderate the expression of his views. He went to Parliament, not as a representative of Middle-class Liberalism; he claimed to speak in behalf of the working-men who represented four-fifths of this Constituency.

This demonstration of Radicalism had a special meaning with reference to the condition of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons. Disgusted by his failure at the General Election in 1874, and apprehensive of failing strength, Mr Gladstone in 1875 had announced, in what appeared to be final language, his withdrawal from the Party Leadership. For the succession to his place, at least in the House of Commons, the only serious candidates were Lord Hartington and Mr Forster. Though the former was by his family connections associated with Whig rather

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than Radical opinions, he was a comparatively young man, and generally believed to cherish the highest ambition. It was, therefore, assumed and hoped that he would prove fairly malleable, and "move with the times," whilst his reputation for cautiousness would be useful as tending to reassure timid politicians. Mr Forster, on the other hand, though in some respects far more advanced in views, was essentially a stubborn man, who could neither be cajoled nor coerced into going beyond the limits he had marked out for himself. Moreover, he had been the Minister responsible for the Education Act, and it was due to his personal insistence that Mr Gladstone's Cabinet accepted and carried the religious compromise which had given mortal offence to the National Education League. The selection of Lord Hartington in Mr Gladstone's place, therefore, was largely due to Nonconformist influence, and, in part at least, it was an act of vengeance on the Statesman who had defied that body.

Routed as the Liberals had been at the General Election, the Radical group had gained in political *prestige*: they had foretold the defeat of Mr Gladstone, and, by refusing in some cases to support his candidates, they had contributed to the result. They had acted on their threats, and the Conservatives, who had profited by the revolt, naturally looked with interest, and not without a certain left-handed favour, on the men who had done them this good turn. Mr Chamberlain was one of the new members who specially attracted their curious regard. He was sure to get a good hearing in the House of Commons if he chose his opportunity with discretion. He waited till nearly the end of the Session before he intervened in Debate, and the subject chosen for his Maiden Speech, Lord

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Sandon's Education Bill, was one on which he was well-informed. In the course of the discussion some reference had been made to the Birmingham School Board, and its action described as a disgrace to the town. Mr Chamberlain denied that he and his colleagues had evaded the intention of Mr Forster's Act, and set up a system of purely Secular Education. They had endeavoured to make attendance compulsory before the new Board Schools were built, and therefore they had found it necessary to provide the fees for poor children at certain Denominational Schools. But this expedient had broken down, simply because hundreds of persons flatly refused to pay this "new Church Rate"—they would rather be distrained upon. The plan was, therefore, abandoned; even the Denominational members of the Board declined to enforce the claim, and provision was made to meet the case by voluntary subscription. Ultimately, it was decided to institute complete separation of the Religious from the Secular Teaching, and never had the former been so efficient as it then became.

It was not till after the meeting of Parliament in the following year (1877), that Mr Chamberlain addressed the House again. This time it was against the proposal of the Home Secretary (Mr Cross) to substitute Imperial for Local administration of Prisons. A humorous account of the scene was written at the time by Mr H. W. Lucy:—

"It would be interesting to know exactly what opinion Sir Walter Barttelot formed of Mr Chamberlain's probable appearance, before he had the pleasure of meeting him face to face in the House of Commons. He had evidently evolved some fancy picture, for his surprise at seeing the

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junior member for Birmingham in a coat, and even a waistcoat, and in hearing him speak very good English in a quiet and undemonstrative manner, was undisguised. . . . When, therefore, there arose, from a bench below the gangway opposite, a slightly-made, youthful, almost boyish-looking person, with a black coat fearlessly unbuttoned to display the waistcoat and disclose the shirt-collar and necktie, Sir Walter began to stare, and cast side-glances at that other great legislator, Colonel Corbett, in the startled endeavour to know what he thought of *this*. Moreover, the Radical wore, not spectacles with tin or brass rims, as Felix Holt would undoubtedly have done if his sight had been impaired, but — an eye-glass. Positively an eye-glass, framed in precisely the same style as that which Colonel Corbett himself wears, when his good-humoured face is turned towards a distant object. Surprise deepened when the Radical, in a low, clear, and admirably-pitched voice, and with a manner self-possessed without being self-assertive, proceeded to discuss the Prisons Bill, opposing it on the very lines which Sir Walter had made his Torres-Vedras when he besieged the Bill last session. This was very remarkable; but there was only one thing for an English gentleman to do, and that Sir Walter promptly did."

When Mr Chamberlain had finished, Sir Walter walked across the House and shook hands with him. As to the Measure itself, it was not likely that Mr Chamberlain would support any scheme for increasing Central at the expense of Local authority—that the representative of so self-reliant a town as Birmingham would consent to see its power diminished. There is little doubt that the change in administration which

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Mr Chamberlain denounced has been generally beneficial, but it was not difficult to bring forward plausible arguments on the other side. Any little saving made on the Rates would be counter-balanced by a double burden on the Taxes. As for Government contracts, the officials he had always found very civil, but no system was less adapted to obtaining a good article at a fair price. If the Government were taking over the Prisons, why did they not also take over the Industrial Schools and Reformatories? Finally—as a stroke of Parliamentary wit—he protested against the proceedings of the Conservative Government as being Radical and Revolutionary!

Mr Chamberlain's first Parliamentary Vacation was spent on a visit, in the company of Mr Jesse Collings, to Sweden and Lapland. If their chief object was recreation, the tour (described in the *Fortnightly Review* for December 1876) was also utilised for a public purpose. On several occasions Mr Chamberlain had insisted on the need for legislation to reduce the evils of intemperance, and the system which he favoured was neither penal nor confiscatory. As it was clearly the interest of publicans, or the brewers for whom they were agents, to push the sale of intoxicating liquors, he believed that the traffic should be gradually removed from their hands, and taken over by the Local Authority. Municipal officers employed for the retail business would have no object in attracting customers, nor would they be tempted to supply liquor of a bad quality, or to adulterate it with stimulating ingredients. This, substantially, was the system which had been established in various Swedish towns, especially at Gothenburg, from which its name is taken; and Mr Chamber-

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lain was anxious to find out, from personal observation and inquiries on the spot, how the principle —which had commended itself to his own mind before he had heard of its application in Sweden— worked out in practice. The favourable accounts which he had received were, it seems, confirmed by what he saw (and was taken to see), though it should be mentioned that other observers have since arrived at a very different opinion on the merits of the Gothenburg system. Mr Chamberlain, perhaps, made more allowance than was necessary for the fact that the Swedish regulations did not apply to the sale of beer (which was practically unrestricted), and thought, not unnaturally, that the Municipal control would have been more efficient if it had been made complete. He was at least convinced that it embodied a valuable reform, and would much improve the existing state of things. Radical as he was, he was never one of those "logical" politicians who repudiate a partial reform because they cannot carry the whole of their programme.

Soon after his return to Birmingham he placed his views before the Liberal Six Hundred, and in the following January (1877) he induced the Town Council, by 40 votes against 1, to apply to Parliament for powers to adopt a similar Licensing system. By way of keeping the subject alive, he published another Magazine article on it, and gave notice of a Resolution in the House of Commons. On that assembly, though he obtained a good hearing, having already "got the ear of the House," his scheme made no definite impression. Nor did it receive any warm support from the Temperance Party, who then, as now, cared but little for any scheme that started by offering compensation to the

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licensed victuallers who were to be dispossessed. They had not realised (perhaps they are now just beginning to understand) that the country will never consent to any scheme of general expropriation unless a fair *solatium* is given to the interests affected—whether they are or are not "vested" in the eye of the Law. Mr Chamberlain was aware of this in 1876, and earnestly pressed his point on the root-and-branch reformers. They were not converted; and in 1894 he admitted that they had kept his scheme in abeyance. He entreated the members of the United Kingdom Alliance to reconsider their position; and until wiser counsels should prevail he feared that the history of Temperance agitation would continue to be "a dismal record of the wrecks of well-meant efforts and promising experiments."

Only last year he repeated this opinion, and renewed his expressions of confidence in the scheme that was shelved by Parliament in 1877, though the House of Lords Committee, before which he appeared as witness that year, reported in favour of giving a trial to this among other expedients. As for the moral argument, that the traffic in strong drink is an accursed thing in which no public body should take part, he made short work of it. By drawing Revenue from the trade, the State was already implicated in any evil there might be. Already it assumed responsibility for the control and regulation of the trade — the only question was whether the duty was efficiently discharged. Mr Spurgeon had said—or been reported to say—that if he could save souls by standing on his head he would always preach in that position! "Well," Mr Chamberlain went on, "if I could save half the drunkards in Birmingham, if I

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could relieve them from the consequences of the vice to which they are a prey, if I could increase to that extent the happiness and prosperity of the community by turning publican, I would put on an apron and serve behind a bar to-morrow, and I should say I could not possibly engage in a nobler or more religious work." At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the existing Licensing System has been attacked by nobody more unsparingly than by Mr Chamberlain, and, though he has always stood out for what he considers fair treatment for the publicans, he was at one time lampooned and caricatured as bitterly as any Prohibitionist orator, while the Teetotallers have denounced him as a Friend of the Trade. His position on the Temperance question remains what it was in 1887. Only the other day, at Johannesburg, he suggested the adoption of a modified Gothenburg system, and one of his first political utterances on his return to this country, was to condemn the withdrawal of licences from well-conducted houses without compensation to the tenants.

Other subjects in which he intervened in Debate during the early years of his Parliamentary career related chiefly to Local Government, the state of Endowed Schools in Ireland, the prevention of Cattle Disease, and various legal reforms connected with Patents, Bankruptcy, and Merchant Shipping. On these, and similar subjects, he spoke with the authority of a practical man of business, and with the lucidity that pleases an assembly which likes to be instructed easily. The *reclâme* of a slashing platform orator had preceded him at Westminster: but he had established, before Parliament was dissolved in

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1880, the more useful reputation of a man who does not shrink from the trouble of getting up a host of complicated facts, while his controversial sallies on such matters as Flogging in the Army, and on the Eastern Question—which had then reached an acute state—showed him to be as effective in *ex-tempore* discussion as in set speeches. He was, in fact, engaged, whether intentionally or not, in moulding himself to the accepted type of Parliamentary Statesmanship.

Though cautiousness of speech has never been accounted one of his qualities, and though he employed on foreign politics some of the strong language which he used so freely in regard to domestic affairs, he managed not to commit himself to propositions which a few years later might prove embarrassing. He remembered in Opposition that he might hereafter become a responsible Minister of State. From his first entry into the House of Commons, there can be no doubt that Mr Chamberlain regarded himself as member of some future, and not very distant, Administration. Though a vigorous assailant of Mr Disraeli's policy in the East, he spoke without enthusiasm of Russia, and kept his invectives against Turkey within the bounds of moderation. He dwelt on the advisability of strengthening the Greek Kingdom—the *enfant gâté* of English Radicalism—as a bulwark against Muscovite aggression in Europe; suggested that Great Britain might arrive at an amicable understanding with the Czar's Government; and did not believe that Russia had any desire to possess herself of India. No nation could covet so onerous a dominion!

It has often been said of Mr Chamberlain,

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that he was at this time one of the "Little Englanders"—a name not then invented—nor can it be denied that he accepted and generally approved the lines laid down by Mr Gladstone at this, the most passionate, epoch of an animated career. No Liberal politician of the time spoke more scornfully than Mr Chamberlain of "the noisy Imperialism of the music-halls," or sought more eagerly to depreciate the Peace with Honour which Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury brought back from Berlin in 1878. It cannot be pretended that he had realised the future importance of our Possessions in South Africa, or the necessity for extending and consolidating our Empire in that part of the world. He disparaged the Annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, as in 1881 he became a party to the Retrocession; he denounced the conduct of Sir Bartle Frere in Zululand in 1879, just as in 1880 he became a party to the recall of that energetic High Commissioner.

Nor can it properly be urged, by those who seek to credit a Statesman whom they admire with life-long consistency of opinion, that he may have dissented in private from the collective attitude of the Ministry to which he belonged. This plea may or may not apply to anything that happened between 1880 and 1885; but from 1876 to 1880 he was a "free lance," and made a demonstrative use of his liberty. If he had disagreed with the views of the Liberal Leaders on South African affairs, there was nothing to prevent him from proclaiming the difference. Nor would he have scrupled to do so. On other subjects, he did not hesitate to flout his official leaders. In the discussion, for instance, on Flogging in the Army, the Conservative Ministers

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had practically conceded the Radical demand, but, on a Conservative revolt being led by Sir Walter Barttelot, they withdrew from a compromise which had been almost arranged. There was great indignation on the Radical benches, but Lord Hartington, coming down late, and not being informed of the latest development of affairs, got up and deprecated a continuance of the discussion! It was on this provocation that Mr Chamberlain renounced his allegiance to "the late Leader of the Liberal Party." The insubordinate phrase created the impression which had been intended, and showed, if further evidence was required, that the author meant to strike out a course of his own at Westminster. It was, therefore, from no sense of Party obligations—indeed, he had never enrolled himself as a Liberal—that he abstained from expressing disapproval of the policy with regard to South Africa which was then in favour with official Liberalism.

Although this is a charge of which Mr Chamberlain cannot be absolved, it is a reproach that he shares with all the Statesmen of his day—on both sides of the House. The prescience of Sir Bartle Frere has been vindicated by subsequent events, but it was not then appreciated. We know now that the Zulu power had to be crushed, and that the operation could not have been postponed, if we meant to save the sparse British population of Natal from the horrors of an invasion by Cetywayo's barbarian horde; that in precipitating the collision, as Frere undoubtedly did, he showed the best form of prudence. But it is also true that he acted in excess of his instructions from the Home Government, and, in fact, forced the hand of the Colonial Office. For this official indiscretion the Empire owes

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him no slight debt of gratitude; but at the time it was deeply resented, and he received a sharp reprimand from the Conservative Minister (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) who was then Secretary of State for the Colonies.

It was argued by Liberals—by none more strongly than Mr Chamberlain—that if Ministers did not approve Frere's action they were bound to recall him. But this was at present impossible without bringing disgrace on the British name, and without exposing the loyal natives to the vengeance of the rebels. The Colonists believed in Frere, and to order him home, when they were fighting for very life, would have been a heavy strain on their loyalty. For the present, therefore, it was essential that he should remain at his post, and the Conservative Ministers, though they regretted what they thought his headstrong action, had no course but to accept responsibility for what had been done. Naturally, the Opposition took full advantage of their dilemma, and much political capital was made out of a thoroughly unpopular, and by no means glorious, little war by politicians who believed—with excusable fervour — that the first essential of the hour was to throw the Conservatives out of office, and climb into power. Having committed themselves to wholesale denunciation of Frere's policy, they had no option, when they became responsible for affairs, but to relieve him of his post. It was equally natural that the displaced Conservatives, who had borne the odium of his proceedings, should seek such compensation as they could then obtain by treating him as a martyr sacrificed to gratify the factious spirit of the victors.

As we have seen, Frere had received but grudging support from the Conservatives when

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they could have backed him effectively, but, like every other Administration of either Party, their chief desire with regard to the Colonies was to hear as little as possible about them, and to be spared every expense that might be avoided. In this political indifference to the Empire, and in this desire to keep down the cost of the Army, English Statesmen did but reflect the general feeling of the country. A few voices were raised, once or twice a year, crying in the wilderness of the House of Commons on the Colonial Office Vote; but they were not listened to, and a perfunctory reply from the Treasury Bench was considered to dispose of the whole complaint. The affairs of South Africa were treated with especial neglect. The general belief was that nothing in that region was of much consequence to us, so long as we could hold the Cape, and thus protect our alternative route to India; and as to the power of our Navy in this respect no reasonable misgivings had yet been expressed in any quarter regarded as authoritative. The inner politics of that vast but thinly-inhabited region were dismissed as no concern of ours. Nor was public interest reawakened until the extraordinary mismanagement of our relations with the Boers of the Transvaal had brought ignominy on the British name, and provided the Conservative Opposition with a useful battle-cry.

For his full share in the blame that was visited on his Party for their conduct after they took office in 1880, Mr Chamberlain has never attempted to disclaim responsibility, though it has been said by some of his more intimate friends that he was never quite easy in his mind about the policy of the Government. Jokingly, but not by way of praise, Mr Bright declared

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that Mr Chamberlain was "the only Jingo in Mr Gladstone's Cabinet." However that may have been, he was no "Jingo," not even a moderate Imperialist, when he was helping (from 1876 to 1880) to overthrow the Conservative Government. His speeches on South Africa do, indeed, prove that he had, unlike most Statesmen of the day, taken the trouble to master the details of Colonial history, and he made out a strong case in Parliament for a general inquiry into the manner in which we had found ourselves involved in a series of embarrassing, fruitless, and costly operations. On the other hand, one does not discover any adequate appreciation of the future value of our South African Possessions, or—with an exception that will be noted hereafter—any desire to forestall other Powers in the acquisition of unappropriated territory. The truth is, that Mr Chamberlain, like the majority of his countrymen, was converted to a bolder policy, first, perhaps, by the revelation that Ministers had played an unpopular part in their dealings with the Boers, but chiefly, though not for some years to come, by the sudden increase of the English-speaking population in the gold-bearing districts of the Transvaal.

For the time, Mr Chamberlain had thrown in his lot with Mr Gladstone, and stood by him in his South African as well as in his Eastern policy. The titular headship of the Party did, indeed, still remain with Lord Hartington, and Mr Chamberlain, we know, had supported his election to that office in preference to Mr Forster. But, as we have seen, he had publicly withdrawn his allegiance, and it was perfectly obvious, after the famous speeches delivered by Mr Gladstone in the "Midlothian Campaign," that no other Liberal Statesman could command

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the obedience of the Party. It was on those celebrated orations that the General Election of 1880 was fought and won, but, before the issue had been declared, and while it was even yet doubtful, the Radical member for Birmingham had definitely identified himself with Mr Gladstone. Nor was he contented with giving his personal adherence. He brought with him the great political machine which he had been chiefly instrumental in creating. As the admitted controller of the Caucus, which then had its headquarters at Birmingham, and which still held aloof from the Party Whips, he held the power of either uniting or breaking-up the Opposition. He did not hesitate about his course. The Radicals had their causes of quarrel with the Whigs: between the two groups there were questions which would have to be settled in the future; but Mr Chamberlain had no mind to fight them out in the face of the common adversary. Moreover, though he felt much confidence in the local strength of the new political organisation, it was as yet almost untried, and it was, perhaps, premature to throw down a challenge. The word was given for the Caucus to work on behalf of Liberal candidates, whether Whig or Radical. It was "sheer nonsense," Mr Chamberlain declared, to say that they could not co-operate. The differences between Liberals and Conservatives were far greater than between Whigs and Radicals.

It was in 1877 that Mr Gladstone had first, as it were, been adopted by the still inchoate Caucus. He paid his first visit to Birmingham on 31st May, and delivered one of his customary Philippics against Turkey. Mr Chamberlain confined himself to advocating domestic reforms

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(Free Church, Free Schools, and Free Land), and to arguing for the establishment of a Federation of "all Liberal Associations founded on the principle of popular election." In commenting on the event in the *Fortnightly Review*, he pointed out that no attempt had been made at Birmingham to commit Mr Gladstone to a definite programme. On the other hand, "the most popular Statesman of our time" had expressed his sympathy with the efforts of those who were seeking to restore the fortunes of the Party, and had admitted the claims of the Radicals to recognition and fair consideration in the Party councils. The meaning of these politic ambiguities was sufficiently clear. The Radicals had declared for Mr Gladstone as Prime Minister, and he had intimated that they would be represented in his next Cabinet. There was no formal pledge on either side, but it was agreed that an active policy of attack should be initiated without delay, and the country was to be roused against Ministers by a systematic agitation. Those Leaders who held back should be gently incited to the display of a fighting spirit, and the Federation was to keep them up to the mark! They must be persuaded to "move a little quicker and go a little further!" There was no sort of hostility to Lord Hartington; except Mr Gladstone, no Liberal commanded so much confidence and support! "Surely the Federation might impress him with the necessity for giving direction to the labours of the Liberals, without having imputed to them disloyalty to their Chief in a reckless eagerness to break up the Party."

The personal relations between Mr Bright and Mr Chamberlain had always been, and they always

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remained, something more than friendly. The younger man—though, as we have seen, he dissented, even as a lad, from the Peace Principles advocated by the elder—had missed no opportunity of hearing the great orator. In their joint representation of Birmingham there was the most complete accord, yet it would be difficult to quote a case of two politicians, so closely associated, who disagreed so profoundly on important questions of the day, or approached politics from more widely different points of view. Just at this time—the latter years of the Disraeli Government—they were, for all practical purposes, in substantial harmony, and Mr Chamberlain advised the Liberal Leaders to follow the example of the most earnest, honest, and popular member of the Party—they would never have to complain of ingratitude or indifference.

In their dislike of Clerical influence in the Schools, and in their support of the Nonconformist demand for purely Secular Education, there was no difference between the Quaker and the Unitarian. In the agitation for wide-reaching reforms of our Land System, they could warmly co-operate; both were members of that manufacturing class which, since the days of Free Trade, had nursed a traditional quarrel with the landed interest, and both were animated with a genuine desire to improve the condition and win the support of the agricultural labourers—who were to be made the beneficiaries of the next great Reform Bill.

Here, perhaps, the agreement came to an end. Mr Bright, confident in his unsurpassed qualities of oratory, believed in moving the people by moral suasion and by constant appeals to the nobler passions of man. He knew nothing, and cared nothing, about organising victory and forming

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popular opinion. Mr Chamberlain worked by political machinery and by Programmes. On the occasion of Mr Gladstone's visit to Birmingham, Mr Bright had bantered Mr Chamberlain on his energy and impatience. "I can see he is looking at me," he said, "through his glass, only waiting till I have finished, to get up and protest against what I have said." Nevertheless, though Mr Bright hated Programmes and ignored the Caucus, he did not object to making use of the facilities provided by the organisers, while Mr Chamberlain and his associates did not underestimate the political value of their alliance with the great emotional Statesman. Nor was the elder man forgetful of his obligations to the younger. On the conclusion of one of Mr Chamberlain's speeches at Rochdale (November 1877), Mr Bright said:—

"He has done great service in his own town. There, where he is best known, he is best appreciated. To-night you will give him the warm and cordial and enthusiastic welcome which we owe to every man who in a public position earnestly and consistently endeavours, so far as lies in his power, to give good government to the population of this great Empire. This speech will have large influence amongst you, and wherever it is read. I hope every one of us will feel that we have had a great treat, and that we have been taught a great lesson, and it is our duty to follow the advice he has given us, and to join with the Liberal Party in every part of the kingdom in impressing on the Liberal Leaders that there are yet great things to be done."

The political faith of Mr Bright was clear and concise: it was comprised in and bounded by the elements of Political Economy as interpreted by the

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"Manchester School." He was content to expound the doctrines of Cobden :—"Freedom of trade," it has been said, "freedom of contract, the right of every individual to all liberty which did not interfere with the equal liberty of some other individual, the duty of the State to interfere as little as possible in the private affairs of its citizens, and only to preserve public order, and keep the field open for unrestricted competition—these were the axioms, clear and rigid, by which the old Radicals stood, and which in their time did much to improve the condition and elevate the character of the English people. The coldness and the hardness of the creed, that devil-take-the-hindmost spirit which animated the whole body of doctrine, were for a time disguised by the emotional character of some of the men who professed it. John Mill, for instance, while pressing these views to their utmost extreme in his *Political Economy*, inserted in that famous work many passages—quite inconsistent with its main thesis—which breathed the warmest sympathy with those who, by no fault of their own, came off second-best in the struggle for existence. Bright, again, though he could argue logically when he chose, appealed less to the reason than to the heart, and the underlying harshness, not of his own nature, but of the principles he had adopted, only came out when he opposed tooth-and-nail the humane Factory Legislation proposed by the Conservatives. It was a violation, he believed, and rightly believed, of his cardinal doctrine, that the State should not interfere with the liberty and discretion of private individuals. And the manufacturing class to which he belonged regarded such paternal innovations as inspired, not by any sympathy with the working-classes, but by a desire

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on the part of the country gentlemen to revenge themselves on the mercantile philanthropists who had abolished the Protective Duties which made farming profitable enough to support high rents. But even at this date the full meaning and real consequences of the old-fashioned Economy had not yet impressed themselves on the mind even of thoughtful politicians. Mr Chamberlain never seems to have pinned his faith to theories on which, unconsciously, he had made so extensive an inroad by the example of State, or, more correctly, of Municipal Socialism, which he had set by his administrative work in Birmingham."

It would be impossible to quote any passage from his early speeches or writings which hinted any doubtfulness as to the beneficial effects of Free Trade in the past, or any suggestion that the time might come when it should be exchanged for a system of Reciprocal Treaties of Commerce. The first approach to an open mind on the subject was seen in the discussions with the Colonial Premiers in 1897. But in then advocating an Imperial Zollverein, he was not, he evidently thought, departing from the fundamental doctrines of Free Trade, since the proposal, so far as it had taken definite shape, rested on the condition that all the necessaries of life, and most of its luxuries, could be supplied inside the British Empire.

Nevertheless, though there was yet no ground for attacking Mr Chamberlain's Economic Orthodoxy, he had always worn his faith more lightly than the abstract doctrinaires whose principles Mr Bright interpreted and softened with his golden eloquence. There was, perhaps, nothing in Mr Chamberlain's expressed opinions to prevent him from favouring retaliation against hostile tariffs—

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an expedient which Mr Bright, so far as we can tell, would under no circumstances have contemplated.

Again, Mr Bright's outlook on politics was purely English. Mr Chamberlain's mind was largely influenced (as was that of his friend Mr John Morley) by the sentimental aspects of French Revolution philosophers. He spoke out bravely about the "Rights of Man," as if the "Social Contract" theory on which they were based had not long ago been exploded, and, though kindly enlightened by instructors on the Press, blandly persisted in error. Though, as has been shown already, he had no sympathy with the violent forms of Communism, and more than once repudiated the theory that any legislation could make and keep men equal, or that such a state of things would be desirable, he was not afraid of the name of Socialist. Some of the phrases which he flung out in controversy—notably, his declaration about "Ransom"—showed that he was no unconditional believer in the sanctity of Private Property, and held that Prescription could only be justified if it were accompanied by a genuine sense of Obligation. In adopting such theories as these—from which he was prepared to deduce practical proposals—he stood at almost the opposite pole to the Political Economists who provided Mr Bright with his working Gospel.

Nor was this the only point of contrast between the two members for Birmingham. Mr Bright was a rigid and, within his limits, an exact thinker, whose opinions flowed directly from such *data* as his mind had assimilated. It was in expression only that he gave way to sentiment, imagination, and a certain vein of poetry. He used human passion as a sort of hammer to drive in the nails

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of his logic. But he was almost inaccessible to new ideas, and, though not consciously uncandid with himself, found it very difficult to appreciate facts not in accord with his preconceived general views. Mr Chamberlain, on the other hand, has always been ready, unless engaged in an active personal controversy, to look at both sides of a question, and his views have never been so solid that they might not be modified by fresh evidence or changed by a new current of feeling. His political theories and public career have been determined quite as much by sentiment—by sympathy, by indignation, even by personal affection or resentment—as by reason and calculation. Yet, in expounding the opinions which for the time he holds with almost passionate conviction, he seldom attempts to touch men's deeper feelings. He sets out his facts in lucid sequence; his humour is chiefly displayed in exposing the sophistries or inconsistencies of an opponent; he appears always as the advocate, never as the evangelist.

The natural differences between the two Birmingham Statesmen made them especially formidable in combination. Nor could Radicals in Opposition have desired a better object to attack than the Imperialist policy of Lord Beaconsfield. Looking back on that Statesman's work from the distance of a quarter of a century, though we can see that much in it was solid and enduring, we need not be surprised that, in 1880, it was condemned by the country. True, he had purchased the Suez Canal shares, he had occupied Cyprus, and annexed the Transvaal. But it was not at the time foreseen what an excellent investment we had made in Egypt; Cyprus was represented chiefly as a burden; the Transvaal was considered a worthless tract. On the other side of

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the account was the considerable outlay of money (£6,000,000 sterling) on military precautions: the Zulu War had never been popular; the *imbroglio* in Afghanistan, which began with the murder of Sir Louis Cavagnari, had only been saved by the genius of Stewart and Roberts from resulting in sheer disaster; we had given mortal offence to Russia, and had associated ourselves with support of Turkish misrule. We had done nothing to strengthen the Greek Kingdom, and had helped to cripple the Bulgarian Principality—two small Powers which for the time were in great favour with English Liberalism. To increase the general discontent, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to impose fresh burdens on the taxpayer at a time when trade was languishing and agriculture suffering under a depression that seemed likely to be permanent.

The one great and lasting benefit which Lord Beaconsfield had conferred on the country was not generally recognised, and its genuine value was, it must be admitted, not a little obscured by the tawdry forms in which it was manifested. When he took office, and for a good many years before, the general feeling of Englishmen was that their country could no longer play a great part in the world; the Non-intervention theory which had so long guided our policy, useful as it had been in its day, had bred a spirit of habitual long-suffering which caused us to be ignored in the Councils of Europe. The Imperialism of Lord Beaconsfield, though it brought us to the brink of acute conflict, and though music-hall braggadocio gave it sometimes an offensive expression, did brace the national spirit and revive the old self-reliance of the English people. It is true that during the ensuing five years (1880-

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1885) we received more affronts, and suffered more reverses, than in any corresponding period of our recent history; but a growing proportion of the nation did resent the indignities placed upon it, and, though Mr Gladstone managed to secure a majority on his next appeal to the country, his English support had fallen away. This was due neither to any failure of his own marvellous powers as a leader of opinion, nor to any growth of capacity among the Conservatives, but simply to the seed which Lord Beaconsfield had sown. It had to force its way through the tares—planted, some will say, by his own hand—but it did struggle up, though he did not live to reap the harvest.

When the weary Statesman announced, on 8th March 1880, that Parliament would shortly be dissolved, and issued his famous Letter to the Duke of Marlborough, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, he based his claim to a renewal of power on a direct appeal to the Imperial instinct of Englishmen. During the previous six years, he declared that Ministers had devoted much attention to the interests of Ireland. Yet the arts of agitators had counteracted the liberal and prudent measures of the Legislature. That country was distracted by a danger "scarcely less disastrous in its ultimate results than pestilence and famine." A portion of its population were endeavouring to sever its Constitutional tie to Great Britain. Men of "light and leading" were implored to resist that "destructive doctrine"; the strength of the nation depended on the unity of feeling that should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread Dependencies. Yet there were some who challenged the expediency of the Imperial character of

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the Realm. Having attempted, and failed, to enfeeble the Colonies by their "policy of decomposition," they might recognise in the "disintegration of the United Kingdom" a method by which they would "not only accomplish but precipitate their purpose." Rarely had there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the Peace of Europe would largely depend on the verdict of the country. "Ministers have hitherto been enabled to secure that Peace, so necessary to the welfare of all civilised countries, and so peculiarly the interest of our own. But this ineffable blessing cannot be obtained by the passive principle of Non-interference. Peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendancy, of England in the Councils of Europe."

The vague and grandiloquent language of this Manifesto was eagerly fastened on by the Opposition. They pointed out, not without plausibility, that the continuance of a Conservative Administration meant a prolonged period of foreign complications. The country was tired of anxiety, of wars and rumours of war, and it stood in need of many important domestic reforms, both social and political. As for Lord Beaconsfield's dark sayings about Ireland, they were only derided as mere *charlatanerie.* Home Rule, as it was then known in Parliament, was but the impracticable and almost Academical demand of a small group at Westminster, and there was no apparent likelihood of its ever being adopted by the Liberal Party. As for the secret conspiracies with which Ireland was said to be honey-combed, they were, it was thought, but a figment of Lord Beaconsfield's romancing genius. Not for some months to come was it realised that below his mysterious

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phrases was concealed a knowledge of hard facts and a prescient understanding of influences actually in operation.

It was an unequal battle. The Conservatives had no popular Leader outside the House of Commons. Sir Stafford Northcote was generally respected, but his was no name to conjure with. Lord Beaconsfield was evidently a failing man; Lord Salisbury was still considered a dangerous politician; nor could either of them take any personal part in the electoral struggle. It was left for Mr Gladstone, then at the height of his controversial powers, to sweep the board, assisted as he was by a very remarkable group of Statesmen, all distinguished for intellectual vigour in their different ways, who had not yet revealed that their mental powers were far superior to their administrative capacity. Lord Hartington, Lord Granville, Mr Bright, and Sir William Harcourt appealed each to separate elements of Liberal opinion, and, to quote an expressive vulgarism, they all "went in solid for the Grand Old Man." It is impossible to say what the result would have been if Mr Chamberlain and his following in the Midlands had held aloof—how far the Liberal majority of 1880 might have been reduced. But, as we have seen, he had undertaken to support Mr Gladstone, and, in pursuance of the friendly arrangement which had been thus informally concluded, he placed the services of the Radical Caucus at the disposal of the Liberal Party. The net result was that 349 Liberals were returned against 243 Conservatives and 60 Home Rulers.

In seven only of the sixty-seven Constituencies in which the Caucus had been fairly established was the candidate rejected who had received its

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support. Naturally, Mr Chamberlain claimed and received credit for its work. It was only to be expected, on the other hand, that this very efficient organisation should be denounced by the Conservatives. They were eloquent on the mischief of "machine politics" and the introduction of degrading American institutions into the public life of England. It was in reply to such criticisms that Mr Chamberlain used the following expressions in 1883:—

"I know," he said, "that there are some who express alarm at the recent development of our Liberal organisations. They denounce it as the Caucus; they describe it as a machine. I am not surprised that the Tories should dislike it. I do not wonder that they feel so painfully what they unsuccessfully tried to imitate. These great, open, popular Representative Associations are not at all in their line. They are alien to the spirit of Toryism. The 'Primrose League' is more in their way, with its silly, sentimental title. I confess I am surprised when I find these organisations objected to and criticised by many who profess themselves in sympathy with the Democratic movement. Why, the Democratic movement would lose all its force without organisation. The difficulty of Radicalism in times past has always been that there was no cohesion among the people. Napoleon III. told Mr Cobden, in conversation, that private interests were like a disciplined regiment, while the public good was defended by a disorganised mob. The force of Democracy, to be strong, must be concentrated. It must not be frittered away into numberless units, each of them so preciously independent that no one of them can unite with another even for a single day."

In 1885, again, Mr Chamberlain declared that

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the Caucus was the servant of the People, not its master: it was an engine for concentrating popular opinion, and securing its effectual representation. It was the medium for keeping the Leaders of a Party in touch with, or, if necessary, under the control of, their supporters. Nor should it be forgotten that, when it turned against him in 1886, he maintained the same view of its rights and limitations.

But the best flattery is imitation, and all the essential features of the National Liberal Federation were reproduced in the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, though that body never acquired the same dominating influence which was for a time exercised by its original. It has always been regarded more as an arena for discussion than as a director of policy, and "independent members" have been encouraged to air their private theories quite without prejudice to the Party as a whole. Its practical activity, like that of the Primrose League, has been limited to Election times, and it has been preserved by its moderation. The National Liberal Federation, though still an energetic association, has been crippled by attempting too much. The removal of its headquarters from Birmingham to London, where it was placed in the same building as the Liberal Central Association, and more or less controlled by the Party Whips, deprived it of that contact with outside opinion which its founders had claimed as its chief merit. But in 1880 it was still young, and it was absolutely unofficial. As its Chief, Mr Chamberlain would have been entitled almost to ask his own terms from the Statesman whom he had so materially helped to power. It was inevitable that the Free Lance leader should be offered a command in the Regular forces.

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CHAPTER III

THE RADICALS AND IRELAND

THE condemnation of the Conservative Administration by the country was so unmistakable that Lord Beaconsfield saw no use in waiting for the meeting of Parliament, and being ejected by a formal vote. On 18th April he went down to Windsor and offered his resignation, which the Queen accepted "with much regret." Observing the strict Constitutional etiquette, he recommended as his successor the nominal Leader of the Opposition. For five years Lord Hartington had carried on the somewhat thankless work, and nobody could have blamed him if he had claimed the natural reward. But, even if he had wished to stand on his rights, it would have been impossible for him to keep a majority together in the House of Commons. The Radicals meant to have Mr Gladstone, and nobody but Mr Gladstone would they accept. They did not wish to drive Lord Hartington from the Party, nor could they have afforded to do so. They would work with him, but not under him. The point was never raised, because his loyalty to his old Chief forbade him to enter into such a competition. On his declining the office of Prime Minister, it was considered necessary to offer the reversion to Lord Granville. This was

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merely absurd. Clever and genial as the Liberal Peer was, he possessed none of the qualifications for command. Like Lord Hartington, he stood aside for Mr Gladstone, who was then "sent for" by the Queen, and commanded to form an Administration. With the office of Prime Minister he combined the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Lord Granville went to the Foreign and Lord Hartington to the India Office. Mr Childers became Secretary of State of War, and Lord Northbrook First Lord of the Admiralty. Sir William Harcourt was Home Secretary; the Duke of Argyll, Privy Seal; Mr Forster, Chief Secretary for Ireland; Mr Adam, First Commissioner of Works; Lord Kimberley was given the then secondary post of Colonial Secretary, and Lord Selborne was made Lord Chancellor. All these appointments were what might have been anticipated; the Ministers were men of official experience, and belonged to the more cautious section of the Party. Mr Fawcett, who was given the Post Office, and Mr Mundella, the Vice-President of the Council, were more "advanced" in their views, but neither of them represented the Birmingham type of Radicalism, while the admission of Mr Forster to the Cabinet, though thoroughly justified by his position in the country, his services to the Party, and his administrative experience, was eminently distasteful to the militant Nonconformists, who had by no manner of means laid aside their grudge against the author of the Education Act of 1870.

What, then, was to be done for the Radicals? Mr Gladstone had declared in public that the "men who were in earnest" should be admitted to the Councils of the Party—*i.e.*, there should be a Radical element in his new Cabinet. There was

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no personal bargain with Mr Chamberlain—no pledge, given or implied, that he should be the selected representative of the Forward Group. But it was no fulfilment of the Birmingham understanding to make Mr Bright Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. In the first place, he could not have been left out of Mr Gladstone's Cabinet—his popular influence was too important. In the second place, his Radicalism was in 1880 already becoming antiquated. Finally, though he could always make a great impression in the country when he braced himself for a special effort, he had no taste for the routine of daily detail, no head for business, and his aptitudes had been nicely fitted in the dignified sinecure allotted to him by the Prime Minister. It would be going too far to say that he was the "sleeping partner" in the Government, because he would on occasion arouse himself with very signal effect, but he could not be regarded as an efficient and vigilant representative of the Radical interest.

That duty and distinction lay between two men, closely associated in political views and personal friendship—Sir Charles Dilke and Mr Chamberlain. Both were men of extreme views, rising influence, and untiring industry. Each considered himself entitled to a place in the Cabinet —each was assured of some position in the Government. But they were too shrewd, and too closely united in mutual regard, to run against each other. They had agreed that neither would accept any office unless one or other should be taken into the Cabinet. By this loyal and judicious arrangement they defeated certain old-fashioned colleagues of Mr Gladstone who objected to the admission of either, and hoped, by playing off one

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against the other, to secure the exclusion of both from the charmed circle. Eventually an arrangement was made which was equally satisfactory to Sir Charles Dilke and Mr Chamberlain. The former had an unrivalled knowledge of Continental politics, and was offered the Under-Secretaryship of State for Foreign Affairs. Since his Chief, Lord Granville, was a member of the Upper House, Sir Charles became the mouthpiece of the Government in the Commons, and obtained a position which is practically more important than that of a second-class Cabinet Minister. This cleared the way for Mr Chamberlain, who was made President of the Board of Trade, an office for which he was specially designated by his career as a business man in Birmingham.

If the new Minister was to do justice to himself in a busy and exacting Department, it was necessary to claim release from his remaining Municipal obligations. The retiring Alderman was accorded by the Mayor (Mr Richard Chamberlain) and Corporation a public vote of thanks for his past work in Birmingham. Moreover, his services were commemorated by the presentation to the town of a fountain, with his medallion, which stands in Chamberlain Square, between statues of George Dawson, the well-known preacher, and Sir Josiah Mason, founder of the College that bears his name and has since been incorporated in the new Birmingham University. In the same year Mr Chamberlain gave up his house at Edgbaston, and went to live at "Highbury," which had been built for him near Moor Green, and stood in large grounds, where he set up glass-houses for the cultivation of orchids —which was now almost his only relaxation from public activity.

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His influence in the Cabinet was felt almost at once. On the other hand, it must not be supposed that he always, or generally, got his own way. Almost from the beginning the Cabinet was a scene of conflict between the Whig and the Radical elements, the balance being swayed, first one way and then the other, by those members who had not definitely committed themselves to either side, though a certain outward harmony was maintained by the strong personal authority of the Prime Minister. It was not likely that Mr Chamberlain, who had only been four years in Parliament, would already venture to beard Mr Gladstone. Moreover, that would have been to invite defeat. The Prime Minister was receptive of new ideas, accessible to fresh advisers, amenable to pressure if judiciously applied, but he never allowed his personal authority to be challenged. Some of his colleagues had studied the various ways of "getting the measure of his foot," and had raised their pursuit almost to the dignity of a fine art. In that kind of diplomacy Mr Chamberlain has never excelled, and his methods, when he was still young to Imperial politics, were much less accommodating than they have since been rendered by long years of administrative experience. But when he was overborne he never fell into the blunder that Lord Randolph Churchill committed once too often—that of considering himself indispensable, and offering his resignation in the belief that it would not be accepted. On one occasion, as we shall see, Mr Chamberlain did express a wish to retire from the Government, but that was for a very special reason. In a general way, he relied chiefly on his singular powers of persuasion.

Those who only know Mr Chamberlain on

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the platform, or from his place in Parliament, may be unable to account for his remarkable success in bringing men round to his views. In public, especially when he has been attacked, he seems to feel a boyish delight in saying just the thing that will goad his opponents to fury. Probably he does not always intend to give mortal offence, but the surprise which their resentment gives him soon passes away, and on the next occasion he is quite likely to repeat the indiscretion. But that is a failing which he seldom exhibits in private deliberation, even when there is an acute difference of opinion. He argues his case with excellent temper; he listens carefully to the other side; he will even modify his view on some point of detail, or agree to a reasonable compromise, and he leaves persons who at the outset may have distrusted him with an absolute belief in his sincerity. All these qualities he employed with effect in the first Cabinet of which he was a member, and with the Prime Minister he was eminently fortunate. It was in this way, perhaps, that Mr Gladstone's Second Administration was led into some of the inconsistencies which did it so much harm in public opinion. Sometimes the Old Whigs had their will, sometimes the Radicals, and the result was the Government, collectively, appeared to be a vacillating body, and were taunted, not without justice, by Lord Salisbury on the "sharp curves" which they so frequently executed.

There was no secret made—though Cabinet etiquette forbade any formal disclosure—of the differences that agitated Mr Gladstone's Government. With all the frankness that the subject permitted, Mr Chamberlain, after little more than a year's apprenticeship, explained his methods

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to his constituents. A Liberal Government which was representative of the Party must include men of different shades of opinion. They would all be animated with substantially the same principle, but, though all would be moving in the same direction, the order and rate, even the means and instruments, of progress would be capable of great variety. No single man, therefore, was entitled to expect always to carry his own personal view. They must all be ready to make concessions, and, when the decision of the majority had been formed after full discussion, they must all be ready to put it into force.

Excellent official sentiments! No placeman could have spoken better! But the value lay in the application. What did Mr Chamberlain mean by "full discussion"? And how often did he think that a question might be reopened? The truth was, though he could not say as much in public, that he never accepted an adverse decision as final. For the time he might be, and often was, beaten, but on the first opportunity he would begin the fight all over again. Indeed, though never disloyal, he was, in the first Cabinet to which he belonged, a somewhat uncomfortable colleague; and it happened that among those with whom he had to co-operate were several men with wills as firm as his own, and of much longer experience in public affairs—men not predisposed to favour any proposal that savoured of Birmingham Radicalism. Often, then, he was overborne by the weight of numbers and authority, and for the time he would give way, but only to wait for a favourable opportunity of renewing the struggle. This persistency of purpose, confirmed by several years of almost unchallenged domination in his Town Council, had not yet been modi-

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fied by the larger transactions and wider considerations of national statecraft; he does not seem to have appreciated the value of Compromise until the rupture of the Liberal Party in 1886 compelled him to arrange a *modus vivendi* with his old adversaries. With them, however, it was comparatively easy to arrive at a general understanding that might on both sides be faithfully observed. But, with his associates in a Liberal Administration it was not possible to strike a definitive bargain. Towards them the only duty he recognised was to lead them, one by one, and step by step, towards the Advanced Programme which he kept steadily in view. It was too early to talk about secession. He might have been taken at his word—some of his colleagues would have jumped at the chance of getting rid of him. A well-established Statesman may strengthen his position by a timely resignation: for the probationer it is only a confession of failure. Mr Chamberlain followed the more prudent, and in the long run more effective, method: he "kept on pegging away."

The results of his tactics, alternately aggressive and yielding, were especially shown in the curiously inconstant policy of the Government with regard to Ireland. On other grounds, as we have seen, no love was lost between Mr Chamberlain and Mr Forster. But the antagonism which had arisen over the Education Act of 1870 was revived and intensified on the question of Coercion. Personal rancour there was none on either side, but before the controversy had been long in progress each was doing his best to drive the other out of the Cabinet. Neither man could see any good in the policy of the other, and there was, besides, a certain incompatibility of temper. In the personal

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struggle Mr Chamberlain was successful. It was Mr Forster's posthumous revenge that the victor was before long advocating the very Measures which he had so strongly disapproved, and was, in his turn, denounced by the same adversaries—and almost in identical language. Rich as was the vocabulary of Nationalist abuse, it contained few distinctive maledictions for "Buckshot Forster" and "Judas Chamberlain."

The note of warning sounded by Lord Beaconsfield as to the condition of Ireland had been derided by the Liberals as mere electioneering *blague*, and the "air of Asiatic mystery" in which the prophecy was enveloped prevented it from being taken quite seriously by Conservatives. Yet, to careful observers on the spot, the state of the country, when Mr Gladstone obtained Office in 1880, was giving the gravest disquietude. Outwardly, the appearance was somewhat more pacific than it had been for a few years before. The two distinct movements—one for political separation, the other for confiscation of the landlords' property—had assumed a colourable moderation in the shape of Home Rule and Land Reform. As presented for discussion in England, there was little in either demand that might not fairly be considered by any Advanced Radical. The two agitations, which had hitherto been worked for separate objects and largely by distinct sets of persons, were now brought together by "that genius Parnell," as Lord Salisbury called him.

The mere combination of the two Programmes was, however, no great feat of leadership. As the landlords were, practically, the English garrison in Ireland, the Fenian and the Farmer obviously had an equal interest in making the country too hot to hold them. And it was

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but rudimentary deception for the Irish Party to pretend in England that they were only asking for Local Self-Government and an extension of Tenants' Right. If Mr Parnell had done no more than this he would not have earned Lord Salisbury's sinister commendation. His original and audacious project was to associate these "open," and more or less Constitutional, movements with the treasonable conspiracy of the Physical Force Party in Ireland and America. To carry out his purpose—partly ambitious but chiefly patriotic—he must have command of votes at home and plenty of money from abroad. The votes he got from the Irish farmers, by promising them the freehold of the soil (or something very like it) and persuading them that he was really working for the enfranchisement of the land. The money of the Clan-na-Gael was extracted by denouncing British rule on American platforms, and by promising to destroy the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. This double game Mr Parnell played for some years, and with astonishing success, when it is remembered that he had to play it in public. His American speeches were read in Ireland, his Irish speeches in America, and both in England. Yet not only did he manage to humour both elements in his own following, but he also contrived to find believers and allies in this country—not exclusively among the Radicals.

The first important step was taken in June 1879, when he appeared at Westport on the same platform as Mr Davitt, the Fenian, who had recently been released on ticket-of-leave. The Land Act of 1870 had been a failure, he said, since it left landlords the power of eviction in cases of non-payment of rent. They must ultimately be

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bought out. Meantime, the tenants should pay no more than fair rents, and keep a firm grip of their homesteads and farms. They must not rely entirely on their Parliamentary Representatives—God helped those who helped themselves.

In October, the Land League was formally brought into operation. The objects announced were, on the face of them, approximately legitimate: to reduce rack rents and enable cultivators to become owners of the soil; to defend tenants threatened with eviction; to work the Bright Clauses in the Land Act; and to invest the tenant with the freehold, after payment of a fair rent for a certain term of years. In view of the agricultural depression then prevailing in Ireland, it was resolved that Mr Parnell should visit the United States, and solicit subscriptions for the starving peasantry. It was soon found that a merely philanthropic appeal would not bring in the dollars, and Mr Parnell explained that the Land League, of which he was the moving spirit, did not conflict with "any higher national aspiration for the complete redemption of Ireland." This was good, so far as it went. But something more was necessary. Mr Parnell, as a Member of Parliament, and leader of a Constitutional agitation, was open to suspicion. Early in 1880 he repudiated the charge of undue legality, and pointed out that a successful revolutionary movement must have both an open and a secret side. He would not himself belong to an unlawful association, but would co-operate with one. On 20th February he declared, on behalf of his Party at Westminster, that none of them would be satisfied until they had broken the last link that bound Ireland to England. On his return home a banquet was held in his

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honour, nor did he offer any protest when Mr Biggar expressed the belief, if Constitutional measures should fail to win the rights of Ireland, that she would "produce another Hartmann, and probably with better results"—Hartmann having just been arrested on the charge of attempting to blow up the Czar in the Winter Palace.

The new Parliament had scarcely assembled, in 1880, when the Irish Party started on the policy —in which they had the active support of a Radical group at Westminster—of "squeezing" Mr Gladstone. It had been understood that the Session of 1881 should be set apart for an Irish Land Bill, but the Nationalists insisted upon an immediate instalment. Ministers must find time for a Bill to suspend evictions. Clearly this would derange the Government Programme; besides, as Mr Forster bluntly declared, it would mean a Bill to suspend the Payment of Rent. Nevertheless, the Irish Party in the end had their way: partly through their own capacity for making themselves a nuisance in Parliament, and partly through the support of Mr Bright and Mr Chamberlain within the Cabinet. Ministers announced, just before Midsummer, that they had accepted the principle of the Nationalist proposal, and had incorporated it in their scheme for the relief of distress in Ireland. The operation of the "Compensation for Disturbance" Bill was to be limited to the end of 1881, by which date it was hoped that the contemplated Land Bill would come into force.

Its object was, almost avowedly, to smooth the way for the comprehensive Measure of the ensuing Session, and to keep the Nationalists quiet in the House of Commons. There might be excellent reasons why the Liberals should vote for it. But these had no influence with the

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Peers. Irish landlords dreaded, and English landlords disliked, what they knew would be the leading features of Mr Gladstone's promised legislation; nor had they any desire to make things easy for him at Westminster. Accordingly, the House of Lords rejected the Bill by a majority of 5 to 1 (252 against 51). On the surface, the Bill was not unfair. It gave relief only to tenants who had been prevented from paying their rent by the badness of the seasons, who were willing to continue their occupation on reasonable terms, and whose landlords had refused such terms. Granted that the legislation which Ministers were known to intend was necessary, the preliminary Measure would not be inequitable. But as the Peers refused to accept that hypothesis they might well be excused for rejecting the deduction. If a pitched battle had to be fought in 1881, why should they abandon their outpost in 1880?

The Radicals, of course, made the most of this opening. Both at the time and afterwards, when a state of something like Civil War had arisen in Ireland, they attributed all the trouble to the rejection of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. They forgot that the Land Bill afterwards presented contained limitations which destroyed its virtue in the eyes of the Irish Agrarians, and that when it came up for Third Reading in the Commons Mr Parnell and his immediate following had walked out of the House. Mr Gladstone, no doubt, had attached importance to the Land Bill, and so had Mr Chamberlain. Probably they believed that, though it did not satisfy the Irish members, it would, nevertheless, placate the tenants:—

"You will recollect," said Mr Chamberlain,

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"the solemn warning which Mr Gladstone addressed to us in reference to the state of affairs. He said, 'Ireland stands within measurable distance of Civil War,' and he urged that this Bill (Compensation for Disturbance) should be accepted as, in the opinion of the Government, necessary to strengthen their hands, and to enable them to secure obedience to Law and Order. The warning was neglected—the House of Lords rejected the Bill, and I say, never in the history of that House has it committed a more unwise and a more unpatriotic act. If that Bill had been passed, we have the assurance of the Leaders of the Irish Land League themselves that they could not have successfully continued their agitation. The Bill was rejected, and Civil War has begun. Class is arrayed against class in social strife, and now 30,000 soldiers and 12,000 policemen are barely sufficient to enable the Government to protect the lives and the property of the Queen's subjects in Ireland."

Whether the Bill, if passed, would have done good in Ireland, it is impossible to say. Certainly the rejection of it was not the cause of the disorder. This had begun before the Bill was proposed or thought of. Months before, the agitation against rent had been started, the Land League had been organised, and the Fenians had been at work—witness the raid on the *Juno*, when forty cases of fire-arms were carried off. This enterprise had been formally condemned by the Cork Branch of the Land League, whereupon Mr Brennan and Mr Dillon had suggested that it would be well if the Cork people were to mind their own business. The rebuke was dutifully taken to heart, and the offending Resolution was

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cancelled. The practice of Boycotting had not merely been condoned, it had been expounded and enjoined, by Mr Parnell:—

"What," he asked, "are you to do with a tenant who bids for a farm from which his neighbour has been evicted? ('Kill him!' 'Shoot him!') Now, I think I heard somebody say, 'Shoot him!' ('Shoot him!') I wish to point out a very much better way—a more Christian and charitable way—which will give the lost sinner an opportunity of repenting. ('Hear, hear!') When a man takes a farm from which another has been evicted, you must show him on the roadside when you meet him, you must show him in the streets of the town, you must show him at the shop-counter, you must show him in the fair and in the market-place, and even in the place of worship—by leaving him severely alone, by putting him into a moral Coventry, by isolating him from his kind as a leper of old—you must show him your detestation of the crime he has committed; and you may depend upon it, if the population of a county in Ireland carry out this doctrine, that there will be no man so full of avarice, so lost to sense of shame, as to dare the public opinion of all right-thinking men within the county, and to transgress your unwritten code of laws."

The truth was that Mr Gladstone was growing tired of Mr Parnell and his incessant Parliamentary menace—convinced, also, that the agitation in rural Ireland could only be controlled by strong measures. There was little doubt that the Coercionists in the Government were getting the upper hand, and the "Birmingham Members of the Cabinet," as Lord Salisbury pleasantly called them, had to make their choice between resigning and acquiescing in exceptional action against

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disorder. It was even rumoured that Mr Bright was weakening in his belief that "Force was no remedy." As Lord Salisbury pointed out, that was not the opinion of the Land League. Every day it was bringing new districts under its control—if necessary, by assassination, but more generally by torment and torture, cruelty, and destruction of property. Mr Chamberlain had asked why it was that Order had been maintained under a Conservative regime, but Anarchy had broken out as soon as the Liberals came into office. Lord Salisbury's reply was that the Irish were demoralised by "the electioneering habits of the Liberal Party."

"Crime and outrage," he had said on another occasion, "though very disagreeable to those who live in the midst of them, have a Parliamentary value. A Land Bill, especially if it contained confiscatory clauses, would fall very flat if there were no disturbances in Ireland. The longer the disturbance continues, the fiercer it becomes, and the more cause there would seem to be for exceptional legislation next Session; and if there are members of the Government—as I suspect there are—who have some pet project, some darling theory, to promote, they will wish for that state of things which will furnish the argument that will best establish their theories. On the other hand, if the landlords are delivered over for the winter to the tender mercies of the Land League, it may be hoped they will be more pliable next Spring, and will offer their fleeces more readily to the shearer who may desire to shear them. In other words, the present state of Ireland, all the Anarchy, and all the crime committed in that country, are so many arguments for future legislation. Every person who is shot, or wounded,

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or carded, or tarred and feathered, contributes to bring revolutionary principles with regard to the land of Ireland within the range of practical politics. He will act on Mr Gladstone's mind with the same effect as the Clerkenwell outrage."

Though these taunts and others like them, bitter and effective as they were, would not have moved the Radicals from their policy if Mr Gladstone had stood firm, he perceived that the opinion of the country—already irritated by events abroad—was turning against him: he had, besides, a strong hatred of the more violent forms of illegality. On 25th September matters were brought pretty well to a head by the murder of Lord Mountmorres—not the worst instance in a series of deliberate assassinations. Not only were such crimes frequent, but they were committed with the sympathy, probably with the complicity, of the people amongst whom the victims resided. It was impossible to obtain convictions, or even to collect evidence. Before the end of October, criminal informations had been filed against Mr Parnell, Mr Dillon, Mr Biggar, and other leaders of the Land League, and in the following month it was announced in the City by Mr Gladstone—amid general applause—that the Law must be enforced in Ireland before any relief could be granted to the farmers. To this he made the significant addition that, if the existing facilities at the disposal of the authorities were not sufficient, Parliament would be asked to entrust the Government with fresh powers.

This was an absolute repudiation of the whole Radical position. Naturally, it was resisted in the Cabinet by Mr Chamberlain—who was on fairly intimate terms with Mr Justin M'Carthy and other moderate members of the Home Rule

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Party. The meetings of the Cabinet in November—the usual time for settling the business of the ensuing Session — were so numerous and protracted that rumours went about that a Ministerial crisis was impending. Mr Chamberlain, however, gave way. Had he at this time withdrawn from the Cabinet on such a question, he would probably have received little support in the country, except, perhaps, in his own district. The Nationalists made it very difficult for an English politician to stand by them. Such order as was kept in Ireland was kept by military force. It required 7000 men to overawe the rioters while a party of friendly Orangemen, imported from Ulster, were engaged in getting the harvest on Captain Boycott's estate.

The Coercionist proposals of the Government, explained on the meeting of Parliament, 7th January 1881, were embodied in two Measures. The Preservation of Peace Bill rendered the possession of arms within any "Proclaimed District" a punishable offence. The Protection of Life and Property claimed the most arbitrary power ever demanded by a modern English Ministry. It authorised the Lord-Lieutenant to issue a warrant for the arrest of any person whom he might "reasonably suspect" of any treasonable or agrarian offence. Such a person must be treated as an unconvicted person, but might be kept in custody till 30th September of 1882, without being brought to trial. It was in this way that Mr Forster hoped to lay his hand on those "village tyrants" who practised outrage and intimidation with impunity, because they knew that nobody dared to give evidence against them. "If I had thought," he said, "that this duty would devolve on an Irish Secretary, I would never have held the office; if I

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could have foreseen that this would be the end of twenty years of Parliamentary life, I would have left Parliament rather than undertake it." If Mr Forster showed so much repugnance in making this proposal, what must have been the feelings of his Radical colleagues in acceding to it? It was noticed that the hostile Amendment to the Address, which was moved by Mr Parnell, was supported in the lobby by eight of the English Radicals most closely associated with Mr Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke. Neither of them spoke on the Bill, but Mr Bright surprised the House by delivering an impassioned defence of it. He had always voted against coercive Measures in the past, because he did not believe them to be necessary. This Measure he did consider necessary—he trusted Mr Forster, and the law of the Land League had superseded the law of Parliament. Other coercive Bills had not been accompanied by remedial measures: this was to be followed by a wide scheme of agrarian reform.

The difficulty of accepting the Bill may have been mitigated to Mr Chamberlain by the unprecedented Obstruction practised by the Irish members in opposing it. A Debate of forty-one hours was only brought to an end by Speaker Brand resorting to a *coup* of somewhat doubtful legality. Mr Chamberlain has always attached a possibly exaggerated importance to the efficiency of Parliamentary Institutions, and regards it as almost a sacred principle that the will of the majority shall prevail. He was especially irritated by the Nationalist tactics, because they prolonged a controversy which placed him in a very awkward position, and postponed the discussion of the Land Bill which, along with many

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other Liberals, he considered a Message of Peace to Ireland. Not unnaturally, the exasperated Conservatives declared that the Irish deserved no favour from the Parliament which they had defied and insulted. Why not drop the Land Bill, and have done with them? Mr Chamberlain repudiated such counsels:—

"What is to be done now? Well, the Tories have no doubt whatever as to the course which we ought to pursue. By the mouths of their Leaders, by their organs in the Press, they urge upon the Government to put aside at once the Land Bill, to give up any attempt at remedial legislation, and to go to Parliament for more and more Coercion, for the abolition of trial by jury, for the suppression of the Land League, and for other stringent and arbitrary Measures. Well now, for my part, I hate Coercion. I hate the name and I hate the thing. I am bound to say that I believe there is not one of my colleagues who does not hate it as I do. But then we hate disorder more. It seems to me that the issue is now with the Irish people and those who lead them. They can have no doubt any longer. It might have been possible before; they can have no doubt any longer as to the intentions of the Government. We have brought in a Land Bill. We have offered our Message of Peace to the Irish people.

. . . . .

"I do not say that it may not be susceptible of amendment, but I say that, as it stands, and, speaking generally of its main provisions, it has been welcomed by the majority of the Irish Press. It has been frankly accepted as satisfactory by the whole of Ulster. It has been approved—I am always speaking of its main proposals—it

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has been approved by the Roman Catholic clergy."

Virtually, the Measure of which Mr Gladstone and his colleagues had formed such high hopes was an enactment of the "Three F's" (Fair Rent, Fixity of Tenure, and Free Sale), and was based, in some respects, on the Reports of the Richmond and Bessborough Commissions. Briefly, the Fair Rents were to be settled by a special tribunal, the Land Commission—the argument put forward being that in Ireland there was no such thing as free contract between landlord and tenant. Fixity of Tenure was defended as a necessary consequence—it would be no good to settle a Fair Rent if the landlord were able to determine the tenancy at pleasure. The tenant, therefore, was to be secured for a period of fifteen years, during which his rent could not be raised, nor could he be evicted except for nonpayment of rent, or the breach of certain specified covenants. The Free Sale was based on the custom of Tenant Right, which already existed in certain parts of the country: it was now legalised, rendered universal, and considerably enlarged. It was made to consist of two elements — the value of the tenant's "unexhausted improvements" and of the "goodwill of the farm." Besides these three essential features, the Bill contained a number of clauses dealing with Compensation for Disturbance, the Reclamation of Waste Lands, Emigration, and Land Purchase.

A generous measure of Reform, said the complacent Liberals! A policy of sheer confiscation, cried the landlords indignantly! A miserable dole, grumbled Mr Parnell! It must be radically altered before it could be accepted by his Party. As it stood, he would not compromise himself by

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voting for the Third Reading. The Liberals were equally astonished and disgusted by the attitude of the Nationalists, and nobody was more incensed than Mr Chamberlain. They were not in earnest about social reform, he declared in a platform speech :—

"There is no secret about what I am going to say. There is no dispute about it. Mr Parnell and those who follow him have never concealed the fact that their chief object is not the removal of grievances in Ireland, but the separation of Ireland from England. Why, only a few months ago Mr Parnell, speaking in Ireland, said that he would never have joined the Land League, he would have taken no part in this great agitation which has been called into existence to redeem the Irish people from the consequences of centuries of wrong—he would have taken no part in that agitation if he had not thought it would have helped him in the Nationalist and Separatist movement in which he chiefly takes an interest. How can we satisfy these men? Our object is not the same as theirs; we want to remove every just cause of grievance. They want to magnify grievances and to intensify differences. We want to unite the Irish people and the English and the Scotch in bonds of amity. We want, I say, to bind the Irish people to this country in bonds of amity and cordial union, just as much as Scotland is united to England—although the time was when Scotchmen felt as bitter a hostility to the Union as Irishmen now profess to feel. Well, under these circumstances, I find that the gentlemen to whom I have referred do not openly oppose the Land Bill, because, I believe, they are well aware that their constituents would not justify them in such a course. But they are not unwilling to put

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obstacles in its way. They are not unwilling to raise Motions for Adjournment, or to put questions which lead to Debate, and which take up the precious time of the House, which ought to be expended solely in the promotion of this Measure; and, above all, they try by agitation to force upon the Government impossible concessions, the effect of which, if only we were to accept them, they know would be that the Bill would very likely be rejected by the House of Commons, and would certainly be rejected by the House of Peers."

Mr Chamberlain went further than this. He admitted there might be dishonest tenants as well as grasping landlords, that the right to receive a fair and moderate rent was "as much his property as a man's coat or his money," and that the power of eviction must be retained as the only means of exacting a just debt.

In spite of Nationalist ingratitude, and Conservative opposition, Mr Gladstone's Bill was passed without any fundamental alteration in either House of Parliament. If the Government still hoped to pacify Ireland, they had made a great miscalculation. No sooner had Parliament risen than the Nationalist members set themselves to foment disorder. The South and West of Ireland were given over to a No Rent agitation. Mr Gladstone delivered at Leeds a dignified rebuke to the Irish Leader. Mr Parnell desired to stand, as Aaron stood, between the living and the dead; but to stand, not, as Aaron stood, to arrest, but to spread, the plague! Mr Parnell replied, at Wexford, that Mr Gladstone's language was unscrupulous and dishonest! Evidently, it was no good to argue any longer with a politician so lost to all sense of decency. He was "reasonably suspected" of treasonable practices,

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and taken to Kilmainham Prison, where he was presently joined by most of his chief colleagues. The reply of the Land League was issued on 18th October, in the shape of a Manifesto enjoining the tenants to pay no rent until the prisoners should be released. On the 20th the Land League itself was proclaimed as an illegal body. In theory it ceased to exist, but for financial purposes it survived in the Ladies Land League, and for all practical purposes the Proclamation was a dead letter.

So far, it must be confessed, the Irish policy of the Government had been a failure. They had, indeed, carried their Bills, but the Law was openly defied over the greater part of the country, and the leaders of the people were only kept in order by being placed under lock and key. It was under these dispiriting circumstances that Mr Chamberlain went to Liverpool at the end of October, and attempted a general defence of Ministers' treatment of Ireland. It was too much, he said, to expect that "the tardy and incomplete reparation of later years" would at once efface the bitter memories lingering in thousands of Irish cabins. The Peers were once again reminded of their mischievous action in rejecting the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. But the Nationalist Leaders were much to blame because, if they did not countenance, they did at least permit, a system of terrorism which no civilised Government could tolerate. It had been necessary to suppress the Land League—though its ostensible object, the reform of unjust laws, was approved by the Government. But, instead of seeking to remove grievances, it was inflaming them. It was doing its best to make the Land Act a failure. The real object of the agrarian movement was to

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promote the cause of Irish Independence. The Government were bound to interfere unless they were ready to face the prospect of Separation. He could not himself contemplate the establishment of a hostile Power within striking distance of England. Probably it would lead to Civil War. At the best, the two countries would be a standing menace to each other: the Naval and Military expenditure would become intolerable. In the end Ireland would have to be reconquered, or England would be ruined. He said to Ireland what the Northern States in America had said to the Southern—"The Union must be preserved." If that condition were observed there was nothing which Irishmen might not ask and hope to obtain —equal laws, equal justice, and equal prosperity. Their interests and even their prejudices should be respected. But Nature had forged indissoluble links, which could not be sundered without causing misery and ruin to both countries. To keep them intact, all the resources of the Empire would be put into force.

The speech is important because it marks distinctly the point beyond which Mr Chamberlain was resolved not to advance in his extreme concession to Irish opinion. He was unalterably opposed to Separation of the two Kingdoms—and, presumably, to the institution of an Independent Parliament in Dublin. But there was, on the other hand, no repudiation, express or implied, of any Home Rule demand that stopped short of Separation.

As for Coercion—which was the one urgent topic of the day—though Mr Chamberlain spoke of it as necessary, it is by no means clear that in his own mind he was convinced of its virtue. On so essential a question of policy he could

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not separate himself from his colleagues, but his apology, though it may have been sincere, was not very spirited. Evidently he had no heart in a system which his brother Radical, Mr Joseph Cowen, described as "a despotism as remorseless as was operating in Moscow."

But how was it working? When Parliament met in February 1882, the Government alluded, in the Queen's Speech, to certain "signs of improvement," and for some months longer they adhered to their policy. Yet moonlighting, intimidation, and Boycotting were practised all over the South and West; arms were imported without much apparent difficulty; murders were not infrequent, attempts at murder were everyday occurrences; the Land League was at work under a new name, though seven hundred persons were being kept in prison without trial. Presumably they had been selected as the most formidable agents of disorder. Yet while they were in seclusion the mischief went on as merrily as if they were still at large. The legal power under which they were detained would expire at the end of September. As for putting the "suspects" on their trial, there would be no chance of getting a conviction. Such were some of the arguments that Mr Chamberlain was urging against the Coercionist system with which he was unwillingly associated. Why not try what could be done by way of bargain and arrangement? It was known that to Mr Parnell personally confinement was specially irksome, and in order to hasten his release by a few months he might be willing to yield some substantial consideration.

Persistently pressed, not only by Mr Chamberlain, these views at length prevailed with Mr Gladstone. This was the origin of the negotia-

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tions that resulted in the "Treaty of Kilmainham." Mr Forster had no alternative to suggest except that of going to Parliament for still more stringent powers of repression—a course which the Prime Minister disliked, and which, he thought, might involve the resignation of Mr Bright as well as Mr Chamberlain. Apart from their own disbelief in coercive legislation, they had to contend against the incessant pressure applied by their Radical supporters and associates, and their position was becoming both anomalous and uncomfortable.

It is said, and probably it is true, that the first overtures proceeded from Mr Parnell. However that may have been, it is certain that for some little time the go-betweens had been busy, and the political quidnuncs wagged their heads sagaciously when it was announced that Mr Parnell had been released from prison. The explanation offered was that he had suffered a family bereavement, and had been allowed to go out on parole, in order to attend the funeral of his relative in Paris. That he had other business to transact in that Capital has since been ascertained, but the parole part of the story was confirmed by his return to Kilmainham on the 24th. That Mr Forster altogether disapproved of the negotiations then in progress is as certain as that he was informed beforehand that they would be commenced. His consent as Chief Secretary was necessary, in order that the prisoner might in the first instance be set at large. Again, a confidential letter to Mr Gladstone, quoted by Sir T. Wemyss Reid,* shows that he agreed, though only on certain conditions, to the release of the prisoners. "They must give an assurance that they would not, in any way,

* *Life of the Rt. Hon. W. E. Forster.*

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attempt to intimidate men into obedience to their unwritten law." Without such an undertaking, matters would only be made worse—unless the country became so quiet that "Parnell and Co." could do no harm, or unless an Act were passed so strong that it would be possible to govern the country in defiance of them. It is also clear, from Mr Forster's subsequent intervention in the debate on the "Treaty of Kilmainham," that he had been kept informed of the various stages in the transaction.

It is still impossible to give a full account of the transactions, as Mr Gladstone objected in the House of Commons to the production of documentary evidence. But the general course of the dealings is pretty clear from certain letters which have been published. Three days after his release Mr Parnell instructed Captain O'Shea, a member of his Party, and husband of the lady who afterwards became Mrs Parnell, to address Mr Gladstone and Mr Chamberlain on the subject of legislation as to Rent Arrears. Captain O'Shea's story was that Mr Parnell expressed indifference about the treatment of himself and the other suspects. The important thing was to get Ministers to take up the Arrears question. This is not improbable, since, if they adopted Mr Parnell's policy, and brought in a Bill on his lines, they would be bound to let him and his colleagues out of prison. Captain O'Shea also said that he implored his friend and Leader to use his personal influence for restoring order in Ireland. If this also was true, we get the basis of a bargain—Captain O'Shea acting as the "honest broker" for both parties. The Government were to be invited to satisfy Mr Parnell on the Arrears question, and

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Mr Parnell to oblige the Government by giving the word for disorder to come to an end. However that may have been, Captain O'Shea did write both to Mr Gladstone and Mr Chamberlain on 13th April. The Prime Minister's reply was dated two days later:—

"I have received your letter of the 13th, and I will communicate with Mr Forster on the important and varied matter which it contains. I will not now enter upon any portion of that matter, but will simply say that no apology can be required either for the length or the freedom of your letter. On the contrary, both demand my acknowledgments. I am very sensible of the spirit in which you write, but I think you assume the existence of a spirit on my part with which you can sympathise. Whether there be any agreement as to the means, the end in view is of vast moment, and assuredly no resentment, personal prejudice, or false shame, or other impediment extraneous to the matter itself, will prevent the Government from treading in that path which may most safely lead to the pacification of Ireland."

Mr Chamberlain's answer was dated the 17th:

"I am really very much obliged to you for your letter, and especially for the copy of your very important and interesting communication to Mr Gladstone. I am not in a position, as you will understand, to write you fully on the subject, but I think I may say that there appears to me nothing in your proposal which does not deserve consideration. I entirely agree in your view that it is the duty of the Government to lose no opportunity of acquainting themselves with representative opinion in Ireland, and for that purpose that we ought to welcome suggestion and criticism from every quarter and from all sections and classes of Irishmen, provided that they are animated by a desire for good government, and not by a blind hatred of all government whatever. There is one thing must be borne in mind —that if the Government and the Liberal Party generally are bound to show greater consideration than they have hitherto done for Irish opinion, on the other hand the leaders of the Irish Party must pay some attention to public opinion

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in England and in Scotland. Since the present Government have been in office they have not had the slightest assistance in this direction. On the contrary, some of the Irish members have acted as if their object were to embitter and prejudice the English nation. The result is, that nothing would be easier than at the present moment to get up in every large town an anti-Irish agitation, almost as formidable as the anti-Jewish agitation in Russia. I fail to see how Irishmen or Ireland can profit by such policy, and I shall rejoice whenever the time comes that a more hopeful spirit is manifested on both sides."

Captain O'Shea was less successful in his dealings with Mr Forster. Though numerous interviews were held, the Chief Secretary held to his opinion that no terms could be arranged, but he gave him practically free access to the "suspects" in Kilmainham.

It should here be mentioned that separate negotiations were being conducted, though with the same object, through Mr Justin M'Carthy, who acted as intermediary between Mr Chamberlain and Mr Parnell. In this case also a definite understanding was arrived at, and was embodied in a letter from Mr Parnell to Mr M'Carthy, dated 30th April. This letter (which for some reason Mr Gladstone was unwilling to produce) lays down practically the same stipulations on the Arrears and other Agrarian questions as Mr Parnell's letter of the 30th, which was read out in the House of Commons. The difference is that the earlier letter does not contain that undertaking by Mr Parnell (to co-operate cordially with the Liberal Party) which caused and invited so much unfavourable comment. If it be granted that Mr Gladstone was justified in coming to terms with Mr Parnell, and that it was becoming to barter an Arrears Bill for Nationalist help in stopping outrages, the arrangement outlined in

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the letter to Mr M'Carthy was perfectly unexceptionable. The offensive element in the bargain was that Ministers should have sought to buy over the Irish vote—only a few months after the Nationalist Party had formally resolved to take their places on the Opposition side of the House. Naturally, the Conservatives made the most of this "corrupt" understanding, and their advantage was increased by the absurd attempts to conceal the arrangement. The text of this letter is given below, and it will be seen that the opening sentence refers to the document which is in Mr M'Carthy's possession. The clause printed in *italics* is the one that gave rise to most of the controversy.

"I was very sorry that you had left Albert Mansions before I reached London from Eltham, as I had wished to tell you that, after our conversation, I had made up my mind that it would be proper for me to put Mr M'Carthy in possession of the views which I had previously communicated to you. I desire to impress upon you the absolute necessity of a settlement of the Arrears question which will leave no recurring sore connected with it behind, and which will enable us to show the smaller tenantry that they have been treated with justice and some generosity. The proposal you have described to me, as suggested in some quarters, of making a Loan, over however many years the payment might be spread, should be absolutely rejected, for reasons which I have already fully explained to you. If the Arrears question be settled upon the lines indicated by us, I have every confidence—a confidence shared by my colleagues—that the exertions which we should be able to make strenuously, and unremittingly, would be effective in stopping outrages and

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intimidation of all kinds. As regards permanent legislation of an ameliorative character, I may say that the views which you always shared with me, as to the admission of leaseholders to the Fair-Rent Clauses of the Act, are more confirmed than ever. So long as the flower of the Irish peasantry are kept outside the Act, there cannot be any permanent settlement of the Land question, which we all so much desire. I should also strongly hope that some compromise might be arrived at, this Session, with regard to the amendment of the tenure clauses. It is unnecessary for me to dwell upon the enormous advantage to be derived from the full extension of the Purchase Clauses, which now seem practically to have been adopted by all parties. The accomplishment of the programme I have sketched out to you would, in my judgment, be regarded by the country as a practical settlement of the Land Question, *and would, I feel sure, enable us to co-operate cordially for the future with the Liberal Party in forwarding Liberal principles and measures of general reform;* and I believe that the Government at the end of this Session would, from the state of the country, feel themselves thoroughly justified in dispensing with further coercive measures."

On the same day as this letter was, or purported to be, written, Captain O'Shea saw Mr Forster, who made a memorandum of the conversation, of which he gave the following account in the House of Commons.

"After telling me that he had been from eleven to five yesterday with Parnell, O'Shea gave me his letter to him, saying that he hoped it would be a satisfactory expression of union with the Liberal Party. After carefully reading it, I said

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to him, 'Is that all, do you think, that Parnell would be inclined to say?' He said, 'What more do you want? Doubtless, I could supplement.' I said, 'It comes to this—that upon our doing certain things, he will help us to prevent outrages,' or words to that effect. He again said, 'How can I supplement it?' referring, I imagine, to different measures. I did not feel justified in giving him my own opinion, which might be interpreted to be that of the Cabinet, so I said I had better show the letter to Mr Gladstone, and one or two others. He said, 'Well, there may be faults in expression, but the thing is done; if these words will not do, I must get others; but what is obtained is' (and here he used most remarkable words) 'that the conspiracy, which has been used to get up Boycotting and outrages, will now be used to put them down, and that there will be a union in the Liberal Party.' And as an illustration of how the first of these results was to be obtained, he said that Parnell hoped to make use of a certain person [Sheridan], and get him back from abroad, as he would be able to help him to put down conspiracy or agitation—I am not sure which word was used—as he knew all its details in the West. He was a released suspect, against whom we have for some time had a fresh warrant, and who, under disguises, had hitherto eluded the police, coming backwards and forwards from Egan to the outrage-mongers in the West. I did not feel myself sufficiently master of the situation to let him see what I thought of this confidence, but I again told him that I could not do more at present than tell others what he had told me."

It was this arrangement which Mr Forster branded as a "disgraceful compromise," and which it is so difficult to reconcile with Mr Glad-

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stone's explicit declaration that "Mr Parnell had asked nothing from the Government, and the Government sought nothing from him." In writing to Mr Forster privately, Mr Gladstone had referred to Mr Parnell's promise of support to the Liberal Party as "a *hors d'œuvre* which we had no right to expect." The rough-and-ready explanation, much favoured at the time by indignant Conservatives, is that the Prime Minister told a falsehood! That may be dismissed. The probability is that he really did regard the arrangement as to an Arrears Bill, on the one hand, and the cessation of outrages, on the other, as the substantial part of the "Treaty" —the only part embodied in the letter to Mr M'Carthy—and that the promise of Nationalist co-operation at Westminster was, what he called it, simply a *hors d'œuvre*, an agreeable supplement, not demanded on his authority, but thoroughly acceptable as a voluntary offering. Mr Gladstone was, it may be added with all respect to his memory, constitutionally incapable of seeing that there could be anything at all shady in a promise to support his own policy. That was not the sort of thing which, to his mind, required apology or explanation.

Why, then, was the concealment attempted? When Mr Parnell on 15th May rose in the House of Commons to make an explanation, he was supplied by Captain O'Shea with a copy of the letter which he had addressed to that gentleman. This he read from beginning to end. But in this no reference was made to the Nationalist promise of co-operation with the Liberals. Thereupon Mr Forster produced another document which he insisted that Captain O'Shea should communicate to the House. Mr Chamberlain's

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explanation was that Captain O'Shea had privately asked leave to withdraw that particular clause, and that he had agreed. The incident, however, was unimportant, and had left, he said, but little impression on his mind.

Naturally, Mr Chamberlain sought to make light of the whole affair. There can be little doubt that Mr Parnell, when he gave the pledge, did not intend that it should become public property. The reason was obvious. He had been preaching on a hundred platforms that the Nationalists must be independent of English politicians, and ready to accept from either Party all they could extort, but should give thanks to neither. How would he keep the Republican Brotherhood under control if they could say that his Parliamentary followers were but so many items in Mr Gladstone's majority. Already the Fenians were becoming restive under the good behaviour which he had induced them to practise by pretending that he too was working for Rebellion, and only waiting for the right moment? What would be the attitude of the Clan-na-Gael when he paid his next visit to America? How could he ask for a subsidy from the "Skirmishing Fund" when he was proved to be no more of a rebel than Mr Butt had been, or Mr Shaw?

The letter which had been submitted to the Cabinet was never intended for general publication. Probably it would never have seen the light but for the action of Mr Forster. The whole bargain —not merely this private clause—was one to which he could not assent. Two days after the date of this letter it was announced that the Chief Secretary had resigned, and that the Lord Lieutenant (Lord Cowper) had gone with him.

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It was clear that an arrangement which had cost the Government the services of the titular as well as the acting Chief of the Irish Executive would be narrowly scrutinised by Parliament. Mr Forster was a man of strong feelings, and it was known that, on personal and public grounds, he warmly resented the treatment which he had received from his colleagues. His policy had been discussed at length, it had been adopted, and, before a fair trial had been given it, he was thrown over. Against Mr Chamberlain, as the author of his downfall, and as the exponent of a dangerous policy, he was especially incensed. It was not, therefore, likely that he would give quarter when battle should be joined on the floor of the House. If Ministers had only had themselves to consider, they would probably, as sensible men, have made a clean breast of the whole business. It was no such terrible matter—this purchase of Irish votes—provided that the Bill which they promised in return were a fair and reasonable measure. Both Parties had done such things before, and would do them again. It was the puerile deception that did so much damage to Ministers. Either they lost their heads entirely, or they considered themselves bound not to reveal what Mr Parnell wished to keep secret.

He had, indeed, excellent reason—as he had learned on his recent visit to Paris—for feeling nervous about the Fenians. They had been kept long enough, they thought, at the heel of a Parliamentary Leader. They cared nothing for Land Bills and Arrears Bills; nothing for the progress of the Home Rule cause. So far as they had any feeling on such subjects, they disliked every Measure that would promote contentment in Ireland. With an irrational, but

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absolutely genuine, hatred of the English race, the Irish National Invincibles, a small group working mostly in the dark, but having their connections with the chiefs of the "open movement," were resolved to strike a blow at the English Government. It is untrue to suggest that Mr Parnell, Mr Dillon, or any of the other Parliamentary leaders were aware beforehand of the plot which was successfully carried out on Saturday evening, 6th May, in the Phœnix Park. Mr Parnell had been warned — as the Government also had been informed — that mischief was brewing. The murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke, hacked to death by surgical knives within sight of the Castle, was but the sequel to a series of projected attempts on Mr Forster which had been frustrated only by accident.

The chief purpose of this daring crime was to force Mr Parnell's hand and to prevent the Irish people from being led further astray into the paths of Constitutional agitation. Against this kind of outrage Mr Parnell and his Land Leaguers were powerless. They could raise their fingers, and landlord-shooting, rick-burning, boycotting, cattle-maiming, would come to an end. But they had no control over the wilder spirits which they had hoped to use as their agents and instruments. Mr Parnell was not a truthful man: he felt and professed no scruple about deceiving the "English Parliament," but he spoke from his heart when he expressed, in the House of Commons, his "unqualified detestation" of the crime committed two days before. It had been perpetrated, he said, by men who "absolutely detested the cause with which he had been associated." That crime

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had been devised and carried out as the "deadliest blow which they had it in their power to deal against the hopes of his Party in connection with the new career on which the Government had just entered."

The "new career" which had been contemplated by the Government, but from which they were diverted by the Phœnix Park murders, was, of course, the abandonment of Coercion, signalised by the retirement of Lord Cowper and Mr Forster. Who was to be the new Chief Secretary? The natural course would, perhaps, have been to select as Mr Forster's successor the Minister who had been chiefly instrumental in reversing his policy. Mr Chamberlain did expect — though he declared that he did not desire — that the post would be offered him. Certainly he could not have refused it. If a policy of conciliation was to be recommended, who more suitable for the work than the friend of Mr Parnell, the intimate associate of several Nationalist members, and (for good or evil) the author of the Treaty of Kilmainham? On the resignation of Mr Forster he went so far—Mr Justin M'Carthy has recorded—as to send for some of the leading members of the Irish Party, and ask for their advice. Presumably their reply was not unfavourable. But the chance of testing their assurances was never given to Mr Chamberlain. The post was offered to Sir Charles Dilke, but without a seat on the Cabinet, and on that ground was declined. By Mr Chamberlain, who was already a member of that body, it would, no doubt, have been accepted.

In a few days, the vacancy was renewed by the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish—but

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under what altered circumstances! Generously enough, Mr Forster volunteered to discharge the duties during any interval that might elapse, but Mr (now Sir) George Trevelyan was ready to accept the post. There was no more talk of dropping Coercion. On the day of Lord Frederick Cavendish's funeral his successor introduced the Prevention of Crimes Bill. Amongst other stringent provisions it enabled the Lord Lieutenant to order trials for treason, murder, or attempted murder, aggravated violence, and attacks on dwelling-houses to be held before three Judges and without a Jury, though with an appeal to the Court for Criminal Cases Reserved. Another important power was that of holding an inquiry into a crime though the accused had made his escape, and of levying compensation in the district where a murder or maiming had taken place. The only qualifying element in the Bill was that the duration was limited to three years. It was no consolation to the Nationalists that such a Measure—which struck at the very heart of their influence—was accompanied by the promised Arrears Bill. Mr Dillon repudiated the gift in what Mr Gladstone called a heart-breaking speech. The idea of co-operation between Liberals and Nationalists was given up as completely as if the "Treaty of Kilmainham" had never been drafted. The Irish set themselves with the best of their will to obstruct the proceedings of the House of Commons, and it must be confessed that they achieved no slight success.

But in Ireland itself the new Executive was working with vigorous efficiency. The exceptional powers given to Lord Spencer and Mr Trevelyan were administered without fear or favour, and in

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February 1883, Mr Chamberlain, though he never seems to have modified his opinions, bore no grudging testimony to the good work of his colleagues. A "qualified peace," he said at Swansea, had been established in Ireland:—

"Peace and order have been restored; crime and outrage have almost ceased. In the meantime, the black conspiracies of murder and violence, which had gathered round the outskirts of the agitation, have been exposed and unmasked, and their authors are being brought to punishment. I say we have the right to claim credit for this success. We have the right to ask that fair-minded opponents shall acknowledge it. But I say that success is due to the fact that, while we have firmly administered the law, we have also recognised the substantial grievances of the Irish people—on which their discontent was founded; and we have made extraordinary efforts to remove those grievances. Without the Land Act, which is the mark of Lord Salisbury's scorn, you would have had no peace, even the qualified peace we have at present in Ireland. Lord Salisbury's moral, which he wished you to draw, is that force is the only remedy. Force is no remedy for discontent—and force alone has never removed the causes of discontent, of which the crime and outrage that we deplore are the extreme and unjustifiable expression."

Not in that way was the Irish problem to be solved. After "eighty years of stormy union" the country was still hostile and unreconciled:—

"Coercion has failed to extort submission. Concession has been powerless to soften her animosity. I do not wonder sometimes that disappointment and even despair should fill the minds of men when they see the efforts, the unexampled

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and unremitting efforts, which were made in the last two Sessions by the English Parliament to do justice to Ireland, met by words of menace and insult, and followed by worse than words, by deeds —by disorder, by crimes of violence, and by cowardly assassinations. Every nerve should be strained to detect and to punish the authors of those crimes. But we should blind ourselves to the teachings of our history, and to the experience of every other country, if we did not recognise in the existence of these crimes, and in the unfortunate fact that a large proportion of the population sympathise with those who commit them, an indication of a social condition altogether rotten, which it is the bounden duty of Statesmen to investigate and to reform. There are only two other courses open to you. You may, as some truculent writers have urged, abandon altogether the idea of the Constitutional government of Ireland, and rule the country as a conquered Dependency. How long do you suppose such a state of things would last? How long do you suppose that Englishmen with their free institutions would tolerate the existence of an Irish Poland so near to our own shores? It is too late to speak of such a scheme.

"The other alternative is Separation, which I believe would jeopardise the security of this country, and which I am sure would be fatal to the prosperity and the happiness of Ireland. Well, I reject both alternatives. I contend that both are equally impossible and equally intolerable; but it is to these conclusions that you are inevitably driven if you accept the arguments of those public writers and speakers who have been urging you to abandon hereafter all further conciliation, and have been protesting against, as they say, truckling any more to Irish discontent. I say that as long as

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there is any just cause for discontent in Ireland, there is still scope for our remedies. Not until we have removed every just cause for discontent, until we have abolished every grievance, are we entitled to say that, if Irishmen are still dissatisfied, we have at least done our part—the resources of Statesmanship are exhausted. Gentlemen, the present crisis is a test of our faith in Liberal principles. Do not let us be too soon cast down. Centuries of wrong and of oppression have made Ireland what she is. We have no right to expect that a few months, or even a few years, of beneficent legislation will undo the mischief. We cannot take our hands from the plough. Let us go on steadfastly in the path which our great Leader has marked out for us, unmoved by clamour and unshaken by panic. Let us keep on in the even tenor of our way, dictated to us as it is by Liberal principles, and commended to our acceptance by every consideration of justice and of expediency."

Neither in this nor any other speech delivered in that dark and gloomy period is there any suggestion that Mr Chamberlain — incurably optimistic—had given up the hope of reconciling Irishmen to the connection with Great Britain. He was prepared to relax the bond—even by conceding what was then known as Home Rule, which, however, would not include an independent Parliament or a separate Executive. But on this subject it was necessary for a Cabinet Minister to keep his mouth closed, lest he should be considered to be expressing the opinion of his colleagues, though Mr Chamberlain never made any secret of his abstract views on this question, and his remarks, just quoted, on Separation were chiefly intended to mark the point at which he would draw a sharp and impassable line.

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Much the same note ran through a speech which he delivered nearly a year later at Newcastle. The policy of the Government, he said, was what it always had been. They would turn neither to the right nor the left: they would not think their work completed till they had won for Irishmen every right and privilege enjoyed by Englishmen and Scotchmen. Until that had been done, it would be premature to despair of a cordial union between the two countries and of the disappearance of the bitter memories that years of oppression and injustice had stamped on the hearts of the Irish race. The way to promote Separation—which must on no account be contemplated—was to rely on Coercion as the only remedy for Irish discontent.

But in 1884 Englishmen had other things to occupy their minds than the rights and wrongs of Ireland. For a time, though not for long, the Irish question was in abeyance.

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CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1880-1885

THERE are few defenders left of the Foreign Policy of Mr Gladstone's Second Administration. The motives, no doubt, have been misrepresented by excited partisans, but the methods were, admittedly, as unfortunate as the results were deplorable. By the irony of fortune it has turned out that what Ministers themselves regarded as an unhappy entanglement, the British Occupation of Egypt, is their strongest title to favourable remembrance, while their best-intended adventures were most prolific of embarrassment to the country. Nor is it less remarkable that two of Mr Gladstone's colleagues, the Duke of Devonshire and Mr Chamberlain, should have been largely instrumental in undoing the errors for which they shared full responsibility with their Chief. Having been brought into power mainly on their denunciation of Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern policy, the new Ministry were expected to reverse it, so far as that could be done without a breach of our national obligations. They took their stand on the Berlin Treaty, and, ignoring the particulars in which Russia was evading that instrument, they demanded a strict fulfilment on the part of Turkey. Lord Granville

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issued a Circular Note to the Powers, inviting them to unite with Great Britain in putting pressure on the Porte to execute its covenants with regard to Montenegro, Greece, and Armenia. A sort of European Concert was arranged, a series of Collective Notes were addressed to Constantinople, and a Joint Naval Demonstration was held off Dulcigno. In the end a certain delimitation of frontiers was agreed upon. Montenegro was satisfied, though not without an outbreak of local hostilities: and Greece was put off with a small instalment of its demands, which it was coerced by its patrons into accepting—as something on account.

Just as Russia had taken its revenge upon us, for having arrested its advance on Constantinople, by embroiling us in Afghanistan, so did the Sultan retaliate on the Gladstone Ministry, for the further dismemberment of his Empire, by making trouble for us in Egypt. Lord Salisbury has since confessed that, in backing Turkey against Russia in 1878, we had "put our money on the wrong horse." The mischief was completed in 1880, when we made an enemy of the Sultan. By alternately offending Russia and Turkey we so arranged our international "book" that in any event we must be losers.

It would be an exaggeration to say that the Porte originated the rebellion of Arabi; but the Khedive, Tewfik Pasha, was well aware that his Suzerain favoured the so-called "Nationalist rising" which aimed at releasing Egypt from the uncertain hold of the Anglo-French Condominium. At that time the Egyptian Viceroy stood in somewhat close relations with the Sultan, and his authority was largely dependent on Turkish Pashas. When the Arabi movement first

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showed its head, the behaviour of Tewfik was something more than vacillating. Nor can his hesitation be made a matter of censure. He had no reason for believing that the Condominium would interfere by force to protect him from his Army—he believed, as Prince Bismarck believed, that England and France would either paralyse each other's action by mutual jealousy, or else come into open conflict. By one of the accidents which have built up the British Empire, it happened at the critical moment that M. Gambetta resigned office, and France was deprived of a Statesman who undoubtedly would have maintained its position in the Valley of the Nile.

His successor, M. de Freycinet, was an equally able but less confident politician. He was ready to join in a Naval Demonstration, but the French ironclads were on no account to go into action! For this timidity of purpose he has been much blamed by his countrymen, but he may have had excellent reasons for not relying on the apparent benevolence of Germany, and was by no means anxious to lock up a good part of the French fleet in operations of secondary importance. The hesitation of the two Powers was, of course, an encouragement to Arabi. He proceeded to excesses that called for prompt action, and engaged himself in fortifying Alexandria against the British fleet lying off the shore. On being ordered by Sir Beauchamp Seymour (Lord Alcester) to desist, he fired the first shot by way of defiance. Thus, on 11th July 1882, began the bombardment of Alexandria, and it was continued next day until Arabi took to flight. That the British Government had never contemplated operations on any large scale was shown by the fact that Seymour's

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ammunition had been exhausted in silencing the Egyptian forts, and that he had no force available for a sufficient landing party. But for this happy improvidence, the incident might have terminated in the summary occupation of Alexandria, and in the restoration of the Condominium. It became necessary, however, to follow up the naval operations with a military expedition, and on 24th July the Prime Minister moved a vote of credit for £2,300,000, and Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent out on the momentous little war that ended in the victory of Tel-el-Kebir.

This, however, was more than Mr Bright could stand. The Prime Minister had tried to make things easy for the conscience of his Quaker colleague by speaking of "military operations" for the "restoration of civil order," but the kindly subterfuge was unavailing, and Mr Bright resigned. He was succeeded at the Duchy of Lancaster by Mr Dodson (Lord Monk Bretton), a Liberal of the official type, whose translation from the Local Government Board made room for Sir Charles Dilke within the Cabinet. Mr Gladstone's loss was Mr Chamberlain's gain. Undoubtedly, the Cabinet was weakened, especially among the Nonconformists, by the retirement of Mr Bright, who was not less remarkable for his moral influence than for his unrivalled oratory. But as a practising Radical his strength was almost spent. His political doctrines were mainly negative—Free Trade, *Laissez-faire*, and Force no Remedy. Within the Cabinet, he was rather a "brake" on Social Reform than an active propeller. Sir Charles Dilke, on the other hand, though his main interest lay in foreign affairs, had begun life as a man of the most extreme opinions; and his Republicanism, though

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it never passed beyond the theoretical stage, was combined with the most advanced views on practical legislation.

It was not possible that two men of such distinct training and different natures as Mr Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke should see eye-to-eye on every question of the day, but their point of view was generally the same, and there were few political schemes in which, by help of some slight compromise, they could not heartily co-operate. They were still an inconsiderable minority in the Cabinet, but they always worked together and played into each other's hands. Neither of them had that abstract horror of War which rendered Mr Bright an almost impossible Minister for a Power which has enemies in every quarter of the world. Sir Charles Dilke has never believed in the pacific intentions of our Continental neighbours. On the contrary, he has always preached the duty of making our Navy and Army stronger; if he has denounced wasteful expenditure in one direction, it has been because the money was wanted in another. Though, like most other Liberals and many Conservatives, he regretted the Occupation, and has advocated the Evacuation, of Egypt, it was because he thought that the offence given to France by our presence at Cairo more than outweighed the advantage of protecting the Suez Canal, if indeed we were thus enabled to protect it. Both Sir Charles Dilke and Mr Chamberlain have always cherished a sort of sentimental tenderness towards France—partly because they are well-read in its literature, partly because it is the only great Continental State which maintains Liberal Institutions.

Speaking for himself and his colleagues in

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March 1883, Mr Chamberlain assured his constituents that the whole Cabinet deeply regretted what they had thought to be the necessity for interference in Egypt. In 1885, again, at Birmingham, he alluded gently to the "natural sensitiveness" on the part of Frenchmen, and deprecated the strong language used by "irresponsible writers in the Press" on both sides of the Channel. He attached, he said, the greatest possible importance to "the French Alliance." Near neighbours as the two countries were, their continued and cordial friendship was the best guarantee for the happiness of both. He could understand people thinking it would have been better not to go into Egypt at all. Yet it must be remembered that it was the highway to our Indian and Colonial possessions. We could not permit any other Power to step in and annex Egypt—as it would have been annexed if it had been left unoccupied. But, having gone in, should we have proclaimed a Protectorate, or should we have forthwith incorporated it within the British Empire? The Government had shrunk from that course in 1882 because they did not wish to risk the friendship of France. The only thing to do, then, was to remain there until we had restored order, and to come away when that task was accomplished—without having sought or obtained any territorial aggrandisement. Unfortunately, that date was being postponed by French jealousy. After the sacrifices we had made, we could not tolerate the idea of making way for another Power to take up a preponderating position there.

The same line of thought was followed five years later—though with a somewhat different moral. In the interval a good many things had

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happened. "I am going to make a confession" (Mr Chamberlain said at Birmingham on 14th March 1890). "I admit I was one of those—I think my views were shared by the whole Cabinet of Mr Gladstone — who regretted the necessity for the Occupation of Egypt. I thought that England had so much to do, such enormous obligations and responsibilities, that we might well escape, if we could, this addition to them; and, when the Occupation was forced upon us, I looked forward with anxiety to an early, it might be even to an immediate, Evacuation. The confession I have to make is that, having seen what are the results of this Occupation, having seen what is the nature of the task we have undertaken, and what progress we have already made towards its accomplishment, I have changed my mind. I say it would be unworthy of this great nation if we did not rise to the full height of our duty, and complete our work before we left the country. We have no right to abandon the duty which has been cast upon us, and the work which already shows so much promise for the advantage of the people with whose destinies we have become involved."

Mr Bright, then, was by no means singular among Liberals in his condemnation of our Egyptian policy in 1882. But if his objection was merely to the commencement of military operations, how was it that he stayed in the Cabinet while we were fighting the Boers the year before? In that quarter of the world we were engaged in a war of attempted subjugation. Technically, no doubt, we were putting down a rebellion; that, perhaps, is what made the difference to Mr Bright's mind. Legally, the enemy

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were British subjects. The Annexation of the Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in 1877 had been denounced by most Liberals at the time, by Mr Chamberlain as well as by Mr Gladstone, and the latter had expressed sympathy with a nation struggling for its freedom. On such expressions as this—though Mr Gladstone was, in theory, no longer Leader of the Opposition—the Boer Leaders had formed the expectation that if he came into power he would restore their Independence. It is impossible to say whether such a project was contemplated by Mr Gladstone; certainly he had never given any pledge on the subject. Anyhow, he had been led to believe that the Boers would be contented with the gift of the "large and liberal" institutions of Self-Government which were promised in the Queen's Speech in 1880. Retrocession, Lord Kimberley explained in the Upper House, was not to be thought of. It was impossible to say in what calamities it would involve the native races.

That was the crux of the whole position. Having smashed the Zulu power (this, Mr Chamberlain had always maintained, was a mistake), we left the coloured population at the mercy of the "European settlers." It was necessary, therefore, to retain the natives under the direct government of the Crown, while we gave the Boers full control over their domestic concerns. But they had no mind for a qualified Independence which prevented them from settling the "Native question" in their own way. The Boer Leaders raised the standard of open revolt, and on 30th December the South African Republic was proclaimed by the Triumvirate, Krüger, Joubert, and Pretorius. British troops had been ordered

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to Natal to crush the insurrection. The Boers, however, decided on aggressive tactics, broke into British territory, and occupied Laing's Nek. Sir George Colley thought it inadvisable to await the reinforcements then on their way, and made an ineffectual attempt on the Boer position. Having occupied Majuba Hill, he was driven from it, and his force cut to pieces. These were "regrettable incidents," though not of first-rate military importance, but they caused indignation and a sense of national shame at home. This, for some reason, Ministers did not realise; they had grown so accustomed to mocking at the extravagances of "Jingo" sentiment—which were, no doubt, sufficiently irritating to responsible Statesmen—that they ignored a genuine outburst of patriotic sensibility. The damage to their reputation, however, might have been repaired if they had allowed Sir Evelyn Wood, who was on the spot with sufficient forces, to restore the situation.

In the Queen's Speech of 1881 they had referred to "military measures" for "prompt vindication of Her Majesty's authority." In January, therefore, they meant to fight. But on 8th February Ministers had altered their minds. If the Boers would desist from armed opposition they should receive guarantees for a friendly settlement. On the 21st, it was arranged that Mr Brand, President of the Orange Free State, should act as intermediary. So elated were the Boers by their victories at Laing's Nek and Majuba that they declined Lord Kimberley's proposals, and offered us an armistice! This was accepted by the British Government, and a Conference was fixed for 21st March. By the Convention of Pretoria we conceded almost

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everything which the Boers had demanded, except, fortunately, that we stipulated for recognition of the Suzerainty of the Crown, and retained a right of Veto on any Treaty which the South African Republic might arrange with a foreign Power. These reservations, small as they were, did afterwards prove to be of substantial Diplomatic value. At the time, however, they appeared quite derisory; and when the terms were explained in Parliament they were received with general astonishment—and something like disgust. It was the greatest and the most damaging of the mistakes made by the Gladstone Ministry. Mr Chamberlain's defence was as good as any other. It did, at least, go into detail, and avoided mere moral platitudes.

"This settlement" (he said at Birmingham on 7th June 1881) "has been the object of violent attack in the House of Peers. You have been told that it constitutes a dismemberment of the Empire, that it is a national surrender; you have been told for the hundredth time that it has destroyed the prestige of England, and it has caused Earl Cairns to blush, who never blushed before. Well, sir, these are terrible calamities, especially the last; but before we consider how far these accusations can be sustained, let me ask you to think seriously what is the alternative which it is said we ought to have adopted. We are accused of dismembering the Empire, and to avoid this, we ought, in the opinion of our opponents, to have maintained the Annexation of the Transvaal. That Annexation was made by the Conservative Government upon two distinct assurances. They declared, in the first place, upon information which was supplied to them,

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that the majority of the white inhabitants in the Transvaal desired the transfer; and they declared that unless it were effected we should infallibly be involved in a Native War which would endanger our South African possessions.

"Well, you all know that after that transfer was effected we found ourselves, in spite of it, immediately involved in two Native Wars—one with Cetywayo and the Zulu people, and the other with Secocoeni; and you know, and they know now, if they did not know before, that the great majority of the Boer inhabitants of the Transvaal are bitterly hostile to the English rule: and yet we are told that we ought to have persevered in wrong-doing, after it was proved that the two grounds upon which the Annexation was defended were fallacious, and rested on no solid foundation—that we should still force our rule on an unwilling people, whose Independence we had solemnly engaged by Treaty to respect. And this we were to do in order to spare Lord Cairns the unwonted blush with which he graced his peroration, and alarmed his brother Peers. I will not at this moment stop to question the morality of such a step as that, but I want you to think for a moment of the expediency of it, of the wisdom of those Statesmen who recommend such a course to Her Majesty's Government. It has been proved to us that the Boers are at all events brave soldiers, that they are skilled in the use of arms, that they are physically, at least, a match even for English soldiers. The Transvaal is a country as large as France—a wild and difficult country—and it is perfectly evident to every one that if we are to hold it down by force we must permanently maintain a

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number of troops at least equal to the number of our possible opponents. Well, we know also that the Orange Free State, which is a neighbouring territory, would make common cause with their co-religionists and men of the same nationality in the Transvaal; and therefore I say that it is perfectly certain that not less than from 15,000 to 20,000 English troops must be permanently stationed there, if we are to hold that country by force and against the will of the inhabitants.

"And to what end are we to do this? To prevent the dismemberment of the Empire. Why, the Annexation was only reluctantly accepted by Lord Carnarvon three years ago. The territory has only been in our hands for a short three years, and it came into our possession upon information which we now know to be incorrect. And if we let them go, this population of 40,000—a population less than that contained in any one of the sixteen Wards of this town in which I am speaking—why, this dismembered Empire of ours will still contain 250,000,000 of subjects to the Queen, to rule whom well and wisely is a duty and a responsibility which I think is sufficient even for the wildest ambition.

"Well, but we are told that there is another course which has recommended itself to some of our critics, and that is, that we should have used the overwhelming forces which we placed at the disposal of Sir Evelyn Wood in order to attack the Boers, and that then, after we had defeated them in a bloody encounter—military honour being satisfied—we might have retired from the Transvaal, which we should have rendered desolate by the slaughter of many of its brave defenders. Before such a recommendation as that should

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commend itself to your minds, and to mine, let us consider for a moment what sort of people these are whom we are asked to treat in this revengeful way. The Boers are not naturally a warlike race. They are a homely, industrious, but somewhat rude and uncivilised nation of farmers, living on the produce of the soil. They are animated by a deep and even stern religious sentiment, and they inherit from their ancestors —the men who won the Independence of Holland from the oppressive rule of Philip II. of Spain— they inherit from them their unconquerable love of freedom and of liberty. Are not these qualities which commend themselves to men of the English race? Are they not virtues which we are proud to believe form the best characteristics of the English people? Is it against such a nation that we are to be called upon to exercise the dread arbitrament of arms? These men settled in the Transvaal in order to escape foreign rule. They had had many quarrels with the British. They left their homes in Natal, as the English Puritans left England and went to the United States, and they founded a little Republic of their own in the heart of Africa. In 1852 we made a Treaty with them; they agreed to give up slavery, which had hitherto prevailed in their midst, and we agreed to respect and to guarantee their Independence."

Mr Chamberlain was less plausible when he ventured on the "magnanimity" line of argument:—

"When the terms of Peace were arranged" (he said), "when the Boers accepted our offer, as we had originally made it, we rejoiced in the prospect of a settlement without further effusion of blood, whether of Englishmen or Dutchmen; and we did not think the English people would feel

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themselves to be humiliated because their Government had refused knowingly to persist in a course of oppression and wrong-doing, and we had accepted, without a victory, terms which were the best we could reasonably expect that even the greatest victory would give to us. We are a great and powerful nation. What is the use of being great and powerful, if we are afraid to admit an error when we are conscious of it? Shame is not in the confession of a mistake. Shame lies only in persistency in wilful wrong-doing."

Much may be forgiven to a peroration. But, as a matter of fact, we know now another reason why Mr Gladstone agreed to an ignominious Peace. It was no sudden awakening to a sense of natural wrong-doing, no unexpected revelation of unknown facts, which changed Mr Gladstone's purpose. This was caused, as the late Lord Kimberley recently explained, by a communication from President Brand. Briefly, this was to the effect that unless the British restored Independence to the Boers of the Transvaal they would also have to fight the Boers of the Orange Free State. This would mean a war of races in South Africa, and from that danger the British Government shrank. It was not a sufficient reason, but at least it was a solid and sensible one — far preferable to professions of magnanimity which never imposed on the English people. It was generally believed in England that Mr Brand was our very good friend. Mr Chamberlain—who, by the way, has more than once repudiated Lord Kimberley's account of Mr Gladstone's motives—gave much credit to the President of the Free State for his action as an intermediary, and for having prevented his own people from going into the War. All

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this confidence may have been thoroughly justified, but it is possible that Mr Brand exaggerated the warlike impulse of his fellow-citizens, and his own difficulty in keeping them under control. His sympathies, no doubt, were with his own race, and it would have been a clever stroke of policy to get the British Government out of the Transvaal without striking a blow, and at the same time earn their gratitude for saving them from an expensive conflict for which they had no heart.

Even if we were menaced with a war of races —which is not so certain as Mr Gladstone and his colleagues honestly believed—what future could they think there would be for Englishmen in South Africa if we gave way before a threat? The Boer never lived who believed that we yielded for any reason but because we had been beaten, and were afraid to try conclusions again. The struggle was only postponed: it could not be averted. What might have been accomplished in 1881 with a comparatively slight effort had to be completed twenty years afterwards at the cost of tens of thousands of lives and hundreds of millions of money.

There is no need here to do more than refer to the Evacuation of Candahar. The strategical arguments—in relation to the existing situation in 1881—were not, perhaps, so one-sided as Opposition critics seemed to think. On the assumption, however, that the withdrawal of the British was justified by military considerations, the decision was regrettable because it strengthened the belief on the Continent that there was no stability in British policy—that a Foreign Chancellerie had to deal with one England when the Conservatives were in power, another when Mr Gladstone became

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Prime Minister. The point was forcibly put in a memorable speech by Lord Beaconsfield, the last he addressed to the House of Lords:—"In every manner and on every occasion it was announced that the change of Government meant a change not merely in every part and portion of the Government, but that everything we considered concluded was to be re-opened, and everything that had been consummated was to be reversed; and that on the most important questions—either on Foreign relations, on Colonial situations, or on domestic position with reference to Ireland—on all these questions the utmost change was to be rapidly and immediately accomplished. Perpetual and complete reversal of all that has occurred was the order that was given, and the profession of faith that was announced." The result was that, with the highest moral purpose, Mr Gladstone's Ministry hardened the general belief of the world in the "bad faith" of Great Britain.

This perpetual vacillation Lord Salisbury naturally, though not quite justly, attributed (when he was speaking in Birmingham at Eastertime in 1883) to the conflict between the Moderate Liberals and the Radicals within the Cabinet. There was, he said, a movement of perpetual zigzag. "It is rather like one of those old Dutch clocks which we used to see in our infancy, when an old woman came out at one time and an old man at another. I would not for one moment attempt to instance who is the old man, and who is the old woman, but we may safely say that the mechanism of our political system is this—when it is going to be fine weather Lord Hartington appears, and when Mr Joseph Chamberlain appears you may look out for squalls."

So far as home politics were concerned, the

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suggestion was, perhaps, not wide of the mark, but it had less bearing on foreign affairs. The *personnel* of the Cabinet had been further modified than by the retirement of Mr Bright and the admission of Sir Charles Dilke. Mr Gladstone's health had been severely strained by the fierce Parliamentary struggles (which included the equally trivial and vexatious Bradlaugh episode) of 1881 and 1882, and he felt no longer equal to the double duties of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The latter office was assigned to Mr Childers, who was succeeded at the War Office by Lord Hartington. The vacancy thus created at the Indian Office was filled by Lord Kimberley, whose place at the Colonial Office was taken by Lord Derby —the Conservative Minister who had parted company with Lord Beaconsfield on the Eastern Question as soon as the British Government proceeded from words to deeds.

With a Cabinet thus composed, it is not difficult to see that counsels of timidity in Foreign and Colonial affairs would not emanate exclusively from the Radical element. As a matter of fact, though Mr Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke concurred, of course, in the collective action of the Government, they were advocates of a comparatively bold policy. The abandonment of the Bechuanas to the tender mercies of the Boers, which Mr Forster had condemned in a stinging speech in the House of Commons, lay uneasily on their conscience. Though they did not prevent Lord Derby from allowing Mr Krüger to whittle the Pretoria Convention (1881) down to the still more exiguous Convention of London (1884), they did urge, and urged successfully, that Sir Charles Warren should be sent on the

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Expedition which rescued Bechuanaland from Boer domination, and reserved an important territory for British occupation.

Injurious to the reputation of the Government as had been their ineffective interposition in the affairs of Eastern Europe, their withdrawal from Candahar, the unpopularity of Lord Ripon's administration of India, and their weak attitude towards the Boers, they were, from the electioneering point of view, still more unhappy in their dealings with the Soudan. The death of General Gordon was their crowning misfortune. The restoration of order at Cairo and Alexandria, and the establishment of Tewfik Pasha in the position where he afterwards proved himself a loyal and staunch friend of Great Britain, was not the end of the responsibilities involved by our action in Egypt. The rapid growth of the military power of Mohammed Ahmed — the Mahdi — and his alliance with the Baggaras had enabled him to overrun the province of Kordofan, and constituted a formidable menace to the outposts of Egyptian civilisation maintained in the provinces of Darfur, Bahr-el-Ghazal, and Equatoria, by Slatin, Lupton, and Emin.

The whole country was, in fact, in open revolt. The Egyptian Government made an attempt to relieve their officers. At the head of 10,000 undisciplined troops, Hicks was sent to occupy Khartoum, which had been abandoned by the Mahdi. After a halt of six months, for the purpose of getting his army into shape, he advanced to the relief of Kordofan. He was met by the Mahdi at Shekan, and his whole army destroyed. Neither he nor any of his European officers escaped to tell the tale. Meantime, the Eastern portion of the Soudan was being overrun

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by Osman Digna, the Mahdi's very capable lieutenant. The garrisons at Suakim, Tokar, and Sinkat were completely isolated. Though it had been decided to abandon the Soudan, the Egyptian Government was at least bound to rescue its outposts; but the force which General Baker led with that object was cut to pieces at El Teb, and he had to fall back with the remnants on Trinkitat. Elsewhere things were no better. Kassala was closely invested by the enemy; Slatin capitulated at Darra; and the Mahdi was advancing (July 1883) to the famous siege of Khartoum.

What was the British Government to do? The Occupation of Egypt Proper had been very unwelcome to that section of their Liberal supporters who adhered to the Non-intervention doctrines of Mr Bright. Nor was it commended, except in a left-handed manner, by those Conservatives who were never tired of exalting the late Lord Beaconsfield's Imperialism. Whether Ministers ventured on a bold policy, or followed a cautious one, they would incur criticism and lose popularity. Their majority was shaken in the House of Commons, in spite of the demoralised condition of the Opposition. At a Cabinet Council held in January 1884, it was decided to adopt a middle course. The limits of the Khedive's authority should be fixed at Wady Halfa; Khartoum should be abandoned, and the troops withdrawn. They could get no assistance, however, from the Ministry of Nubar at Cairo: they must act on their own responsibility. It so happened that General Gordon was on the point of starting for the Congo Free State in the service of the King of the Belgians. They induced him to give up that mission, and assist them in their embarrassment.

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He told them that their programme could not be executed. The Western Soudan, Kordofan, and Darfur should be abandoned, but Khartoum must be held; and with it the provinces between the White Nile and the Red Sea, north of Sennar. They accepted this extension of their scheme, and on 18th January Gordon went forth to "rescue and retire." In the East, General Graham was sent out to deal with Osman Digna. This plan of the Government was, of course, sharply criticised in both Houses of Parliament — they were doing too little, they were doing too much, and what they were attempting had been begun too late.

In all these charges there was something more than an element of justice; but the most reassuring statement was made by Sir Charles Dilke, who said that at the three most critical positions they were served by three of the ablest men who ever served the country—Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) at Cairo, Admiral Hewett at Suakim, and General Gordon at Khartoum. "We ask," he said, "and we follow the advice which these men give us." As a matter of fact, they did not follow Gordon's advice. He proposed to place Khartoum under Zubehr Pasha as Governor, "a quiet, far-seeing, thoughtful man of iron will, and a born ruler of men." He had conquered Darfur, and was a powerful influence in the Soudan. But the Government at home would not employ him—he had been engaged in the slave trade! In April, Lord Hartington announced that the project of withdrawing the garrison from Khartoum had been given up—Gordon must settle down to a prolonged siege. But there was no question of abandoning him, no fear as to his safety. Yet, they knew—and it was made public — that his

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troops had been routed, his Bashi-Bazouks had mutinied, and practically he had to rely for defence on the townspeople of Khartoum. Ministers, no doubt, trusted to the remarkable influence and resourcefulness of Gordon, and hoped that he would find some way out of the difficulty.

Meanwhile, the country was growing impatient. Gordon was a popular hero, and it was known that they would have to pay a severe penalty "if a hair of his head were harmed." He declared that if the millionaires of England and America would equip a force of 2000 or 3000 Turks he would "smash the Mahdi at Khartoum." In reply to Lord Granville's suggestion that he should use his discretion as to holding on where he was or retiring by any available route, he retorted that it would be an "indelible disgrace" to abandon the garrisons at Sennar, Kassala, Berber, and Dongola. He was, it must be confessed, in spite of his genius and loyalty, a somewhat uncomfortable agent for embarrassed Ministers to deal with. When the time comes for the full story of that period to be told, it will be found, perhaps, that the vacillations and procrastinations of the Home authorities, though they can never be justified, were not without some sort of explanation. Gordon's communications to them were not altogether consistent, nor was he always of the same mind. Their fault was not indifference to his fate, but unwillingness to realise the steadily increasing seriousness of the military situation.

The Relief Expedition under Lord Wolseley was ordered too late, and it was too slow in starting. It is true that on 29th December 1884, Gordon had sent word that he could hold Khartoum for another year. But he did not

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reckon against treachery. The town was captured, and the garrison massacred before the rescuers had come up. The general feeling of the country was fairly expressed in the Vote of Censure moved by Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords — that the deplorable failure of the Relief Expedition had been due to the indecision and culpable delay of the Government in commencing operations. There was, no doubt, more difference of opinion with regard to the further declaration that the abandonment of the Soudan was "dangerous to the peace of Egypt and inconsistent with the interests of the Empire." Still, no serious exception could be taken to Lord Salisbury's epigram, that there had been alternate periods of "slumber and rush," and the rush had been "too unprepared and too unintelligent to repair the damage done by the slumber."

The good faith—and the simplicity—of the intentions of the Gladstone Ministry with regard to Egypt were illustrated by the Special Mission which had been entrusted to the late Lord Dufferin. That shrewd and subtle Statesman saw at once that the Dual Control was gone beyond any possible means of recall. It had worked without any intolerable hitch so long as the Sultan was willing to accept the Anglo-French control of Egyptian finance. But Mr Gladstone's policy with regard to South Eastern Europe had so irritated him that no form of co-operation was possible in the future. He had hoped that the Arabi Rebellion, promoted by his agents, would lead to the expulsion of English and French influence from Egypt. Much to his annoyance, though the Condominium had been destroyed, it was replaced by the single and undisputed authority of Great Britain, and his

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Sovereign rights were reduced to a mere titular recognition. The Sultan, then, having been thrust on one side, and the Khedive being prepared to act under English advice, it only remained, since we had renounced the idea of governing Egypt as a Dependency, to grant it some form of nominal Self-Government. The Report prepared by Lord Dufferin, and published early in 1883, sketched out a complete system of reforms, which were to be carried out under the benevolent protection and supervision of the British Government.

Those who are curious in State Papers will be repaid by the perusal of this very clever but absolutely futile document. The views of the Gladstone Government were expressed by Mr Chamberlain, with his usual lucidity, in a speech which he delivered on 15th January 1884, at Newcastle.

"There is a great Party in this country which seems to have learnt nothing by experience, but which is always eager for an extension of an Empire already, I should think, vast enough to satisfy the most inordinate ambition, and which taxes our resources to the utmost in the attempt to govern it well and wisely. If we were to accept the advice which is so freely tendered to us, I predict that the temporary difficulties we have to face would become permanent dangers. What has happened? These unforeseen events may have delayed the execution of our policy, but they have not proved it to be in itself unwise or impossible. The defeat of the Egyptian forces in the Soudan is not necessarily an evil. There have been many similar disasters in the course of the great campaign in the centre of Africa, and there are many parts of the wild country which extends over hundreds of miles into

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the interior which are whitened with the bones of the Egyptian soldiers who have been torn from their homes in order to carry on the projects of their rulers, and all through the Occupation has been a continuous strain upon the resources of a poor country. It has increased the burdens upon the peasantry of Egypt; and now that they are likely to be relieved of this strain upon their resources, they may well be—probably will be—freer to undertake measures of internal improvement, and the Egyptian Government will be able to develop, into a prosperous and self-working institution, the organisation which has already been commenced in that country with fair prospects of success.

"I confess that it surprises me to see that the success of this institution is doubted in quarters in which I should not have expected such a scepticism. I was reading an eloquent speech by your senior member the other day, in which he spoke with scorn of the attempt to engraft Constitutional Government upon Egypt. Egypt, he said, was the product of centuries of enslavement. Well, I am more sanguine than Mr Cowen. I do not believe that any nation is so degraded and so hopeless that it may not be led forward in the work of Self-Government. I think that the problem which he declares so hopeless has been solved within the last few years, almost before our very eyes. It has been solved in the case of Bulgaria, which is making rapid progress under the free institutions with which it has been endowed. These free institutions did not grow up spontaneously, as Mr Cowen says they should do. They were implanted into the country, and Bulgaria had suffered oppression as cruel, and tyranny even greater than the Egyptians, and at the hands

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of the same people—the Turks. In any case, I say that the duty of the Government is clear. We have assumed a duty which we cannot neglect. We have set our hands to the plough, and we ought not to go back. We cannot leave Egypt to anarchy; but, on the other hand, we do not, and we ought not to, withdraw from any of the assurances we have given. The task is likely to be more difficult than was supposed. It will take a longer time than was anticipated. There is nothing in what has happened which makes me think that it will not ultimately, with time, patience, and discretion, succeed, and be completely accomplished."

This sanguine utterance was delivered within a few days of the fall of Khartoum.

As if to complete their unhappiness in Diplomatic relations, the Government, who had been accused of persistently truckling to Russia, were brought, by no fault of theirs, to the very verge of declaring War against the Czar. It had been agreed between Lord Granville and M. de Giers that a Joint Boundary Commission should be appointed by the two Powers. We had warned the Ameer that trouble would ensue if he moved troops up to Penjdeh, and that he must not look for help from us; but he was resolved that the Russians should not take "a piece of a fragment from the ruins of his frontier." Before Sir Peter Lumsden arrived, the Russians and Afghans had exchanged defiances, and on 26th March a conflict broke out, in which the Afghans were completely routed. Though they had acted against our advice, the discomfiture of our allies reflected on us, and in any case we were bound by our interest to prevent the Russians from getting a footing in the Ameer's territory. There was no saying

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where the matter would end. The Indian Government commenced to mobilise its forces. At home, Ministers in both Houses declared, on 26th March, that a "time of emergency" had arisen, and the Reserves were to be called out.

Fortunately, Parliament was on the point of separating for the Easter Recess, but, on 8th April, when it met again, Mr Gladstone, speaking, as he said, in "circumstances of great gravity," declared that an "unprovoked aggression" had been committed. It was not then known in England that the Afghans had been at least as much to blame as the Russians, and for several weeks most Englishmen were convinced that War with Russia was practically inevitable. On 21st April Mr Gladstone announced in the House of Commons that he would ask for a Vote of Credit for £11,000,000 —as it had become necessary to review our military position. Of this sum, he explained that less than half would be required for operations in the Soudan! Quite unexpectedly the storm cleared away. Fuller accounts were received from the scene of disturbance, and the Ameer himself, who was paying a visit to Lord Dufferin, Lord Ripon's successor as Viceroy, declared that he attached little importance to the incident, and was not prepared to insist that Penjdeh was within his territory. The truth was that he found he could not depend on the loyalty of the tribesmen at that point, and was ready to accept some more defensible position, to be arranged between the Indian and Russian Governments.

Though the specific alarm had passed away, the general sense of disquietude remained, and a feeling had arisen that Ministers had generally mismanaged

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the business of the country. In the House of Commons their majority had gradually gone to pieces, and the Nationalists were actively hostile. When the Budget was introduced on 8th June 1885, an Amendment, moved by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, was carried by 12 votes, 39 of the Irish having voted against the Government. In a few days the formalities of resignation were completed, and the end was reached of what Mr Bright had once called the best House of Commons that had ever been elected.

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CHAPTER V

AT THE BOARD OF TRADE

THE office assigned to Mr Chamberlain in 1880, though, in the ninety-four years of its existence, it had been held by several men who afterwards reached distinction, was but of secondary importance. Neither in salary nor authority does the President of the Board of Trade (reconstituted from Cromwell's Board of Trade and Plantations) rank among the leading members of an Administration. Such influence as he may exercise is derived from his personal qualities—chiefly, perhaps, in his power of forcing his way through the inner group that surrounds most Prime Ministers, and getting the ear of his Chief. Unless the Head of a minor Department possesses this practical quality, he may expect to be told, when the materials are being selected for the Speech from the Throne, that his special proposals must be postponed to another Session. Even if one or two of his Bills have been mentioned in the Government Programme, or advanced as far as Second Reading, they are more than likely to be sacrificed in the "Massacre of Innocents" which is held with almost canonical regularity — on the earliest possible date after Midsummer—when it is found that the "business of the country" has reached a state of hopeless congestion, *i.e.*, when Ministers

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are forced to confess that they have undertaken more than they can perform. It is the amiable way of a Premier to begin the Session by making things pleasant all round, and promising each of his earnest colleagues full opportunity of legislation for his own Department. Later on—when the Opposition have once again displayed their customary, but always absolutely unexpected, perversity in crossing the plans of a long-suffering Government—he begins to make terms with his Ministers. That is to say, he throws over those who will not make themselves troublesome.

These being the principles on which the affairs of the British Empire are conducted, it behoves every young Administrator who aims at getting personal credit in Parliament, or serving his country faithfully in that Department to which he has been called, to establish a reputation for pertinacity. This useful character Mr Chamberlain had acquired at Birmingham; he improved it in Whitehall. If it had been thought that this "pushing Mayor from the Provinces" would soon "find his level" when he got among "real Statesmen in London," the anticipation was not fulfilled. It will be seen from the record of his work at the Board of Trade in 1880-5, that he managed to press upon a pre-occupied Administration, and to extract from a neglected and ramshackle Department, a solid amount of useful legislation. His disappointment over the Merchant Shipping Bill had been compensated beforehand by his achievements in Patent and Bankruptcy legislation.

The secret of his success need be no mystery —he always worked full time. Most of our prominent public men belong to that comfortable

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class which has no tradition of day-by-day and all-day work, and, though a few ambitious young men of good birth make politics a regular profession, they are, as a rule, not capable of steady and sustained exertion—the few exceptions proving the rule by rapidly attaining high Office. The other class of politicians who help to fill Ministries are men, more or less advanced in years, who have made their positions in some engrossing profession or business, and can spare for Parliament only a portion of their days and the fag-end of their careers. They are valued rather for their experience of men and affairs, their trained judgment, their reputation and influence, than for any driving force contributed to the political mechanism.

Mr Chamberlain, when he entered Parliament at forty years of age, possessed the advantages of both classes without the disabilities of either. The almost abnormal youthfulness of his appearance was but an accurate expression of unimpaired energies, while with the unfettered leisure of a man of fortune he combined the habits of a man of business. Whether in agitating on public platforms or directing Party organisation, he laboured as industriously as an official whose salary is regulated by the results he achieves. When he was grappling with administrative problems in Whitehall, he was as keen about the efficiency of his Department as if he were building up a private business. The permanent officials found at once that they had to deal—not with an indolent or amateur Chief, who relied on them to coach him for answering Questions in the House of Commons, or for explaining the Departmental Measures that might be demanded by public opinion—but with a Managing Director who

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meant to keep his subordinates up to the mark, and was always on the look-out to encourage and promote those who gave him loyal assistance. Men who have opposed Mr Chamberlain, those who have tried to thwart him, have many hard things to say of him; but those who have worked in concert with him all agree that he never forgets efficient service, and (like Mr Gladstone) has the very useful power of picking out those who can render it. When he went to the Board of Trade, it was not a specially inefficient Department, but its chief officials had been permitted to go their own various ways, and do pretty much as they pleased. Before he left it in 1885, he had animated it with a brief sense of corporate existence, and brought the loosely-compacted organism under the control of a guiding brain.

His beginnings were sufficiently modest. His first Parliamentary Session resulted only in a couple of useful, but not generally important, Measures, relating to the Payment of Seamen's Wages and to Grain Cargoes. In the following year, preoccupied as Parliament was with exciting disputes, and hampered by organised Obstruction, he passed a Measure under which Municipalities that desired to adopt Electric Lighting were relieved from the heavy expense of promoting a special Bill in each case, and could obtain the necessary powers under a Provisional Order from the Board of Trade.

This was a period in our Parliamentary annals when Ministers had to be thankful for small mercies. None of Mr Gladstone's colleagues fretted more impatiently under the legislative impotence of the House of Commons than his President of the Board of Trade, who had

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pledged himself to a number of wide-reaching political changes, as well as to various Departmental Measures. His attempt to reduce the scandalous extravagance of Bankruptcy procedure, and to foil the devices of unscrupulous insolvents, had fallen to the ground, simply because there was no time to discuss the Clauses. It had been introduced before Easter, but it offered so many opportunities alike for legitimate and colourable Debate that it had to be abandoned. The mere sacrifice of this, or any other, Departmental Bill—which was likely to make at least as many enemies as friends—would not, by itself, have stimulated Mr Gladstone to attempt the task of reforming Procedure in the House of Commons. But it had become almost impossible—so resourceful were the Irish members in the art of Obstruction—for Ministers to carry the political Measures in which their collective credit was involved; and the "paralysis of necessary social legislation" came in as a useful argument for strengthening the powers of the majority.

A special Session was convened in the Autumn of 1881 for considering the New Rules of Procedure, and it was known that Mr Chamberlain, comparatively fresh as he was to work at Westminster, had suggested some of the alterations which were then considered almost alarmingly stringent, but which a very short experience showed to be too weak for their purpose, and which had to be enlarged and strengthened by a subsequent Administration.

More efficient, and less controversial, than any attempt to deal with Obstruction on the floor of the House, was the plan, specially favoured by Mr Chamberlain, for transferring the discussion of the details of complicated Bills from a Com-

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mittee of the whole House to one of the two Grand Committees (on Trade and on Law) which were now instituted, and to which a Measure might be referred after the principle had been accepted at the Second Reading. Each Committee was to consist of not less than sixty and not more than eighty members; twenty made a quorum; the proceedings were to be public; and when a Bill had passed the Report stage in one of these Committees it occupied the same position as if it had been "reported" to a Committee of the whole House.

As Mr Chamberlain had been largely responsible for the introduction of this sensible reform, so he was one of the first Ministers to profit by it. In the 1883 Session he reintroduced his Bankruptcy Bill. It was read a second time on 19th March, and then referred to the Grand Committee on Trade. Though it contained about a hundred and fifty Clauses and a number of Schedules, and though it embodied some more or less contentious proposals, it was reported to the House before the end of June, and ultimately became law.

Under the previous system, based on the Act of 1869—a good Measure in its time, but long antiquated—the facilities offered to fraud under the name of Liquidations by Arrangement and Compositions had long been recognised and denounced, but nothing was done to remove the abuses which had grown up, until Mr Chamberlain's first Bill was introduced. He proposed to put an end to such proceedings—collusive, as they frequently were—between the debtor and certain favoured creditors, and recognised no liquidation except in Bankruptcy. For the legal supervision, honest but ineffective, commercial supervision was substituted, and, even if the debtor was himself the peti-

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tioner, he would, *ipso facto*, deprive himself of the control over his estate. This would pass into the hands of the Official Receiver. It was made necessary for a meeting of creditors to be held within seven days of the petition; the acceptance of Compositions was to be strictly controlled; no discharge could be granted except by the Court; the trustees were to be paid a fixed remuneration, and the accounts audited by a public authority. These principles, which were reproduced in the 1883 Bill, had been approved by that excellent Conservative lawyer, Sir John Holker; but a sharp controversy arose on the proposal that all money received by the trustee should be paid into the Bank of England, and Mr Chamberlain agreed that the Board of Trade should be empowered, on application being made, to employ a local Bank. It was calculated, however, that the use of the large balances that would lie from time to time at the disposal of the Government would amount to about £80,000 a year, which would make the new official machinery practically self-supporting.

It was acknowledged by practical men of business, and by all lawyers except those who were interested in maintaining the old system, or felt indisposed to adapt themselves to a novel procedure, that the new Act marked a great improvement. If it has not altogether excluded the possibility of fraudulent evasion, and if the expenses of Bankruptcy administration are still ridiculously disproportionate to the sums involved, the explanation is that habitual insolvents, and the legal advisers whom they employ, are a resourceful race with whose inventions it is not easy for legislation to keep pace. Moreover, it is not the business of lawyers to

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reduce expenses, while the dialectical ingenuity of Judges in the interpretation of Statutes, in this as in many other instances, does much to defeat the well-understood, though sometimes ambiguously expressed, intentions of Parliament. Nevertheless, the 1883 Act has stood the test of time fairly well, and, in spite of slight modifications which have been introduced in one way or another, and although further legislation is now desirable, the existing Law of Bankruptcy is pretty much what Mr Chamberlain made it more than twenty years ago.

In the following Session, it should be mentioned that some of the Conservatives in Parliament—irritated by his vehement agitation for Electoral Reform, and eager to find a handle against him—charged him with having made an unfair use of his patronage under the Act. It was said that of the sixty-seven Official Receivers appointed, no fewer than fifty-one were Liberal in politics, and nineteen had been electioneering agents. His reply was, that the nominations had not been made by himself, but by a Departmental Committee, and that he was personally acquainted with only five of the new officials. Two of them he knew to be Liberals, and one to be a Conservative, while he was ignorant of the views of the others. It is possible, of course, that the Committee to whom the selection had been entrusted may have favoured candidates who professed the same views as the Chief of the Department; but it was not alleged that any of the gentlemen nominated were in any way unfit for the work, or that applicants of conspicuous merit had been passed over merely because they were connected with the Conservative Party.

The Patent Act, which was also passed in

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1883, was intended to assist poor inventors—a class of men very much at the mercy of unscrupulous exploiters — to profit by their discoveries. The Provisional Fee was reduced from £5 to £1, and the "first payment" from £20 to £3. For the sum of £4, therefore, the full rights in a new idea were protected for four years. By that time it should in any likely case be possible to see whether the scheme was worth any serious outlay. For a complete patent it was necessary to pay about £150—not an extravagant charge for a monopoly of fourteen years.

By practical measures of this kind Mr Chamberlain was making a solid reputation in the House of Commons, and, if he had never spoken outside Westminster, it is probable that a different fate might have attended the Merchant Shipping Bill which he introduced in 1884. But, as we shall presently see, his platform activity, in view of the approaching Dissolution of Parliament, had rendered him an equal object of dread and detestation to the Conservatives. Naturally, they set themselves to damage his position in the House of Commons, nor can it be denied that some of the circumstances connected with his Merchant Shipping Bill gave them an opening of which it would have hardly been human not to take advantage. Well-meant as were the proposals with which the President of the Board of Trade now associated the Government, the cause had been prejudiced by the vituperative extravagances of Mr Samuel Plimsoll. The Conservative Government had recognised in 1875 that certain British firms were more or less indifferent to the safety of the crews whom they employed. It paid them better, they thought, to sacrifice a vessel now and then (especially as they would be

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recouped by the insurance) than to spend money every year on keeping it seaworthy. In a few instances, no doubt—though the number was much exaggerated by sensational politicians and novelists in search of a plot—there had been something worse than mere negligence. Vessels had been insured far beyond their value, and sent out to sea for the purpose of being lost or scuttled.

The outcry about these "coffin-ships" had caught the popular imagination, and Sir Charles Adderley (Lord Norton), who was then President of the Board of Trade, had brought in a Bill to check such criminal malpractices. In the course of the Session it was considered necessary or advisable to abandon this Measure. Thereupon Mr Plimsoll, who had made himself the champion of the seamen, worked himself into a state of benevolent excitement. He implored the Government "not to consign some thousands of living human beings to undeserved and miserable death." Turning on certain ship-owning members of the House who had resisted the Bill, he described them as villains whom he was resolved to unmask! Naturally, there was an angry scene, and a few days afterwards, being a generous-hearted man, he made a very handsome apology for the quite unfounded charges he had brought against persons as honourable as himself. But this experience did not induce him to modify his style of advocacy. Nor was public sentiment altogether against him, since his philanthropic intentions were as evident as his perversity.

A temporary Measure was passed before the end of the Session, followed by another in 1876. In 1880 he brought in a Bill which provided

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that all grain cargoes must be loaded in sacks or bags—a sensible and practical proposal, which would materially reduce the risks of navigation. But when it was opposed by the members for Westminster and Guildford, he put up placards in their Constituencies, denouncing their conduct as inhuman and degrading. On being called to account, he began by attempting to justify his conduct; but, on being threatened with the penalties of Breach of Privilege, he made another apology. Here, however, the matter could not be allowed to rest; and Sir Stafford Northcote, as Leader of the House, prepared and carried a formal Motion that the honourable member for Derby had committed a Breach of Privilege, but that, as he had withdrawn the offensive expressions he had employed, the House thought that no further action was necessary. Although nobody believed that Mr Plimsoll had been actuated by personal malice against the gentlemen whom he traduced, it was felt that these successive slanders and retractations had brought discredit on the cause as well as on the champion. Though further amending legislation was carried in 1882 and 1883, neither the House of Commons nor the country was disposed to look very favourably on a comprehensive scheme which was believed to be more or less inspired by Mr Plimsoll. Nor can it be said that Mr Chamberlain's method of promoting legislation was either conciliatory to the shipowners or advantageous to a Government which was already losing its popularity.

In the first place, he had previously associated himself with Mr Plimsoll's outrageous methods. He was Mayor of Birmingham in 1875, and presided at a meeting in that city, held to protest against the action of the Government in abandon-

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ing Sir Charles Adderley's Bill, and to give Mr Plimsoll an assurance of sympathy and support. He had then referred to Mr Plimsoll's wild charges as the expression of a "natural indignation."

It is true that as President of the Board of Trade he had begun by soliciting the assistance of the leading shipowners. In reply to a Deputation from the Associated Chambers of Shipping in March 1883, he had offered, before introducing his Bill, to send it round to the chief shipping organisations, and to invite advice, assistance, and suggestions. He had implored them not to meet him with a *non possumus*, and reminded them it was their interest as well as their duty to remedy abuses. He consulted underwriters, and shipmasters—anybody who was able to give information. But though there was some difference of opinion as to the cause of the mischief there was no difference as to its extent. Nevertheless, he found that "the best men in the trade, men who were conducting their business in a way which could not possibly be criticised, and were doing everything they could for the safety and comfort of their seamen, men who would not be touched by any legislation that anybody could possibly introduce," were nevertheless so "influenced by *esprit de corps*" that they would not move to help him. He was left, therefore, to his own resources.

This, no doubt, was correct, so far as it went. But the respectable shipowners, the overwhelming majority, were influenced by something more than *esprit de corps*. They would only have been too glad to see every black sheep driven out of their business. But they felt, not without reason, that it would be impossible to devise

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restrictions that would control the disreputable firms, which would not also inconvenience and even injure those who enjoyed the highest character. Nothing is more vexatious to an honest man than the constant supervision of officials who insist on treating him as a potential rogue. The most intelligent and elastic administration of Government regulations means waste of time and strain on the temper. Moreover, the British shipowners were already beginning to suffer from foreign competition, and could not afford to give away any points to their rivals. Indeed, whether rightly or wrongly, it is now alleged—by many shipowners who have no sympathy with any kind of dishonesty or inhumanity—that British firms are seriously handicapped by having to conform to rules which are not imposed in foreign ports. However that may be, it was inevitable — though Mr Chamberlain was surprised—that the trade as a whole should resist the legislation which he proposed. Nor were their suspicions allayed, or their apprehensions modified, by knowing that the Minister was in frequent conference and unconcealed sympathy with the man who had defamed them as a body. They had brought Mr Plimsoll to book: they would give Mr Chamberlain a fall.

Yet they could not deny that he had a strong case. There had been not only a terrible loss of life at sea, but much of it was preventible. These were the facts as related by himself:—

"I found, in the first place, every year more than 3000 lives were lost at sea; that in some years this total amounted to 3500 and even more. Consider for a moment under what circumstances these lives were lost. Death is always a pathetic thing; but death, when it comes under circumstances of such horror, and when it comes in the

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shape of a violent end to existence, is still more tragic and pathetic. And it is not only the men whose lives are lost, whose fate you have to consider. What is the fate of their families, who are left without resource, struggling against destitution, when the bread-winner is removed? The next point which struck me was this, that the proportion of this loss of life to the men employed was something extravagant and almost horrible. I stated, the first time I had an occasion of speaking about this subject to the shipowners themselves, that it amounted to 1 in 60 of the men employed in a single year. I have since had more careful calculations made. I have examined the subject from every side, and I say that I understated the facts, and that the loss of life in a single year in the British Mercantile Marine has been actually 1 in 56. But what does it matter whether it is 1 in 56, or 1 in 60, or 1 in 100? It is a loss of life absolutely unparalleled in any other trade, and a loss of life which is deplorable in itself, and which ought not to be endured by a civilised people.

"Then I went on naturally to the next point of the inquiry. I tried to discover how far this loss of life was preventible. I am sorry to say I found too many men inclined to look upon it as a necessary incident in the prosecution of a great commercial enterprise. I say, if this loss of life is a necessary incident, no commercial enterprise which involves it is justifiable. But I do not believe that it is necessary. I have never found any one, impartial and experienced, who denied for a moment that there was not a large proportion of this loss that might be prevented if full and proper precautions were taken in connection with the management of this great business. I found, and this concluded my inquiry, that connected with

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this loss was the extraordinary fact that in a great number of cases, I am not certain that it might not be so in the majority of cases, the owners whose vessels went to the bottom, the bones of whose crews whitened the sands—these men suffered no loss, and might even in some cases make a profit. I thought this was a state of things which loudly called for a remedy. I for one was not prepared to take the responsibility of standing by with folded hands, doing nothing to remove a source of so much misery and suffering to so many of my countrymen."

The Bill, as introduced into the House of Commons in the Session 1884, did not, Mr Chamberlain confessed, go so far as he desired, but he used the concessions—which he had made, he said, "under pressure,"—as arguments why the shipowners should meet him in an amicable spirit. It was not very probable that they would respond to such an appeal. Why should they consent to any compromise with a Government which they had already proved themselves able to influence by open menace? The leading principles of the Bill were reasonable, but the proposed machinery, though not intended to be vexatious, was such as no trade would accept unless it were impossible to offer resistance. The main causes of the unnecessary loss of life at sea, Mr Chamberlain explained at the Second Reading Debate, were under-manning, over-loading, and over-insurance. With the last of these he proposed to deal by formally enacting that a marine insurance was in any case to be no more than a contract for indemnity, so that no shipowner could make a profit by exposing his crew to danger. But if the vessel had been rendered unseaworthy by any neglect on his part he should be disabled from recovering any compen-

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sation under his policy. This, of course, aimed only at the few disreputable firms which were suspected of absolute foul play, but it might place honourable men in the disagreeable position of being called upon to establish their good faith. The contract with officers and seamen was to imply an undertaking that the vessel had been seaworthy when she left port, and that all reasonable means would be employed to keep her in that condition. The owner was brought within the general scope of the Employers' Liability Act (except that he was not responsible for proved errors in navigation), nor was he permitted to contract himself out of his liabilities, either to his crew or the owners of property carried on board. Districts were to be marked out by the Board of Trade, each with a local marine court, consisting of the detaining officer, a shipowners' representative, and an officers' representative. Though the Government official would not be able to detain a vessel against the consent of the shipowners' representative, unless under an order of the Admiralty Court, he was entitled to issue a warning to the owner, the master, and the crew, that the ship was unseaworthy. This would relieve the officers and seamen from the penalties which they would otherwise incur by breaking their contract of service. Fair as this proposal seemed, necessary as it may have been, it put every shipowner more or less under the thumb of Government officials.

The general principles of the Bill were supported by a strong body of philanthropic sentiment, not only on the Radical side of the House. But the shipowners had something more than class-interest to rely on. As to the statements of fact on which the Measure was based, there

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was a strong conflict of evidence. A great part of Mr Chamberlain's case rested on the alleged prevalence of over-insurance. Yet it was asserted by one of the greatest Companies, one that did a business of fifteen millions a year, that it could not trace a single instance of a vessel being voluntarily sacrificed for the sake of getting the insurance money. This is but one example of the many contradictory statements between which the outside public had to choose. It was afterwards established by the Royal Commission appointed in 1885 that, in point of fact, many lives were every year lost at sea through preventible risks, and that the need did exist for drastic legislation. We may also take it that these facts had already been proved to Mr Chamberlain's satisfaction when he drafted his Bill, but at the time when it came before the House of Commons there was no general conviction that such strong measures were required or could be justified. Nor did the reputation either of the Government as a body, or the President of the Board of Trade as an individual, stand so high in point of impartiality that their word would be accepted as sufficient evidence of fact. Justly or unjustly, they were accused of wanton interference with trade interests, and of disregard for the rights of property, and this proposal was plausibly represented as one more instance of a mischievous general propensity.

The storm was too strong for Mr Gladstone, and he gave way. The Bill was withdrawn, and the retreat covered by the appointment of a Royal Commission to conduct an inquiry and issue a Report on the whole subject. Mr Chamberlain was bitterly mortified by the most serious rebuff which he had encountered in public life. He did

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not relish having to confess himself beaten, especially as he was honestly convinced that his remedies were not more violent than the case demanded, and that he had only been defeated by a coalition between Party spirit and Class selfishness. In a private interview with Mr Gladstone, he expressed his desire to resign office, and, being released from responsibility for the decision of the Government, to fight the whole question out on a public platform, and obtain an informal verdict from the country.

Obviously, this suggestion would not suit the Prime Minister. So long as Mr Chamberlain remained a Member of the Administration, he was, as it were, a hostage given by the Radicals to official Liberalism. A General Election could not be far distant; the majority in Parliament were getting out of hand, the Conservatives, so long a disorganised and almost negligible force at Westminster, were becoming confident and aggressive under Lord Randolph Churchill's irregular leadership; the Nationalists were openly and bitterly hostile. If the Radical vote were lost, or merely weakened, Ministers might any evening be defeated in the Lobbies. Even if that peril were avoided, how could Mr Chamberlain's place be filled in the Cabinet? To appoint a Moderate Liberal would be to give umbrage to the Radicals. Yet, which of them would venture to join an Administration that two of their Leaders deserted—and deserted on questions of principle? Mr Bright gone, Mr Chamberlain gone, was it certain that Sir Charles Dilke would remain?

At all costs, Mr Chamberlain must be retained. It is true, that if his resignation had been accepted, he would not have come forward

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as a declared opponent of his late colleagues. That would have been an act of ingratitude towards Mr Gladstone of which he was incapable. Yet it would have been impossible for him to justify his Bill before the country without passing something more than indirect censure on the Government which had thrown it aside. The great body of electors do not care for fine distinctions—a man is either for the Government or against it. Mr Chamberlain might offer explanations and plead excuses for his late colleagues; but there was no way of vindicating himself without showing that the Government had, at least, been guilty of culpable weakness. To let him loose as a free lance, however friendly he might be in his general intentions, was to invite defeat at the polls. Moreover, he was more than a skilful administrator; more than a vigorous speaker; more than an influential leader of opinion in the Midlands—he was also the moving spirit in the National Liberal Federation, the chief engineer of the Party machinery.

These, of course, were not the arguments which Mr Gladstone addressed to his hesitating colleague, nor were they the only ones that weighed in his mind. He had the highest appreciation of Mr Chamberlain's political capacity, and was personally grateful for the staunch and effective help which he had received from the Radicals, chiefly through Mr Chamberlain's adherence. There were, he said, more important matters in hand than the Merchant Shipping Bill. There was, for instance, the question of the Franchise. Liberals were at that time in the very midst of this agitation, and the best chance of doing justice to the seamen lay through a Reformed Parliament. To this movement no man was more deeply

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pledged than Mr Chamberlain, and this, no doubt, was the lure that caught him, when, in "deference to Mr Gladstone's judgment," he withdrew his resignation. At the same time, he was allowed to "save his face." He was not asked, nor would he have consented, to abandon the object aimed at, even if he had to give up the means proposed. Mr Gladstone showed him the "most kind and generous consideration," as he explained in a speech delivered at Hull in August of the following year (1885):—

"Mr Gladstone did the best he could under the circumstances. When the Bill was withdrawn, it was decided to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole subject. I endeavoured to make that Commission as representative and impartial as possible: the shipowners were again dissatisfied. They claimed—what was absolutely unusual and unprecedented in the for mation of such a Commission—that the special interest concerned should be represented by five delegate representatives in addition to those I had already appointed. I say that the demand was absolutely unusual. At the same time, I did not offer opposition to it, and I did not object to it, except so far as I feared the delay which the extension of the numbers of the Commission would cause in its proceedings. It was to me a matter of no consequence at all whether there were five shipowners, or fifty, on the Commission. I have always believed that when the Report is published the public will look to the opinion of the impartial members of the Commission, and not to those who sit as the delegates of the interest chiefly concerned. The Commission was appointed; it has sat and taken a great deal of evidence; and now it has decided that, although its labours are

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not nearly completed, the evidence, so far as it has gone, shall be made public."

Nor did Mr Chamberlain intend that the promise of future legislation on Merchant Shipping should be a mere formality. Though the Report issued by this Commission in November 1885 could not be acted upon, another Commission—practically the same, though under another name—was appointed in 1886 (while Mr Chamberlain was still a member of Mr Gladstone's Third Administration), which published its recommendations in August 1887, when Lord Salisbury had been Prime Minister rather more than a year. In 1888 an Act was passed which was largely based on this Report, and carried through Parliament, at Mr Chamberlain's instance, as part of the general Unionist understanding. It required that every merchant vessel should be provided with such boats, belts, and other life-saving apparatus as might best be adapted to securing the safety of passengers and crew. This was followed in 1892 by another Act, declaring that every ship with a submerged load-line was to be deemed "unsafe" within the meaning of the Act of 1876, and that such submersion should be reasonable and probable cause for detaining the vessel. It was also required that proper inspection should be held of the stores and water provided for the crews of British vessels. Two years later a general Act was carried, which consolidated previous legislation, and consisted of no fewer than 748 sections. It will be seen, therefore, that eventually Mr Chamberlain succeeded in fulfilling no inconsiderable part of the task which he had set himself—more, perhaps, than he could have accomplished had he insisted, in 1884, on Mr Gladstone accepting his offer of resignation.

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CHAPTER VI

THE FRANCHISE AGITATION, 1883-1885

When Mr Chamberlain was given office, the Conservatives in his Constituency hoped—or pretended to hope—that his Departmental labour would diminish his platform activity, and a cartoon of the period represented him as Too Busy to Talk. But no sooner had he got his work at the Board of Trade fairly in hand than he started on an energetic agitation for the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer. This was a measure which had long figured in the list of future Liberal Reforms, but nothing had been done to carry it into effect. It was adopted by Mr Gladstone as part of his understanding with the Birmingham Radicals, and in 1880 he made it an essential element in the Government programme. Indeed, it had been on this ground that Mr Goschen, though not formally seceding from the Party, declined to join the new Administration. Naturally, however, it had been reserved for the closing years of the Parliament. Whether the scheme should succeed or fail, it would provide an equally good cry for the coming General Election. If the Bill were carried, the new voters might be expected to show some gratitude to the Party which had enfranchised them. If it should be lost, a vehement domestic agitation would help to cover the mis-

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takes committed by Ministers in their Foreign policy. In the House of Commons the course of the new Reform Bill would be reasonably smooth. The possible defection of a few old-fashioned Whigs, like Mr Goschen, would be more than compensated by the accession of the "Tory Democrats" and of trimming Conservatives who thought more about the safety of their seats than consistency with their principles. The difficulty would lie with the House of Lords; and even in 1883, a year before the Bill was to be introduced, the Radicals set themselves, by anticipation, to denounce the natural sin of hereditary legislators. Mr Chamberlain was foremost in the movement. Under his guidance the agitation for the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer speedily became a campaign against the Landed Interest and the House of Lords. It was at Swansea on 1st February 1883, that he struck off one of those phrases which cling to his name—his denunciation of the class "who toil not, neither do they spin":—

"Lord Salisbury cares nothing for the bulk of the Irish nation. He calls for vengeance upon the criminals who have been guilty of outrage and violence, and so far I am with him. But then he stops there. He has no sympathy—at least he expresses none—for the great mass of the population, whether of loyal Ulster or the three other Provinces of Ireland, who have been subjected to undeniable tyranny and oppression, and whose wrongs cry aloud for redress. He can express to you in eloquent terms his sympathy for the Irish landlords, who have had to submit to a reduction of 25 per cent. in their rents, but I find nowhere any expression of sympathy for poor tenants, who, for years, under the threat of eviction, and

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the pressure of starvation, have paid those unjust rents levied on their own improvements, and extorted from their desperate toil and hopeless poverty. I say that in this matter, as in so many others, Lord Salisbury constitutes himself the spokesman of a class—of the class to which he himself belongs—'who toil not, neither do they spin'—whose fortunes, as in his case, have originated in grants made long ago, for such services as courtiers render Kings—and have since grown and increased while their owners slept, by the levy of an unearned share on all that other men have done by toil and labour to add to the general wealth and prosperity of the country of which they form a part."

Nothing, of course, would have been more convenient to the Radicals than for the Conservative Party to offer direct opposition to Franchise Reform. But it had been decided, under the guidance of Lord Salisbury, not to deliver a frontal attack, but to demand that the extension of Household Suffrage to the Counties should be accompanied by an equitable Redistribution of Seats. The two measures must proceed *pari passu*, and become law together. Otherwise, the Lords would throw out the Franchise Bill. On this Constitutional ground, the Conservative Party and the House of Commons would rest their case. It was no good, Lord Salisbury said, to talk about sweeping away the Peers. Mr Bright had admitted that they could not be "swept away" except by their own consent. It might be possible to induce them to pass other Measures by threatening to abolish their power, but no threat could induce the House of Lords to vote its own abolition. "Fear of death will induce men to do other things, but it has never

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yet induced any man to commit suicide." The logical force of the argument could not be questioned. But Mr Chamberlain did not believe —nor did the country generally think—that the Peers would stand by it. Nor did he agree with Mr Bright, that the only method of getting rid of the Upper House was to obtain its formal consent to its own extinction. He would, no doubt, have sanctioned any method short of an appeal to force. He believed in moral pressure and public demonstrations. But he began with some show of moderation.

"We are engaged in a great contest," he said at Bristol in the course of the same year. "The battle will be hot, and every man will have an opportunity to win his spurs, and to prove his mettle. We are told that we must be prepared for the worst. The House of Lords will at the last moment exercise its Constitutional prerogative, and will force a Dissolution. We are told that Lord Salisbury has determined on a Plebiscite. Well, I should like to point out to Lord Salisbury that an appeal to three-eighths of the nation — three-eighths of the adult males of the nation—against the claims and the rights of the remaining five-eighths is not an appeal to a Plebiscite; it is an appeal to a minority against a majority, and it has nothing in common with the French contrivance. But, passing that by, I am not afraid of an appeal even to the present limited electorate. No doubt, if Lord Salisbury chooses, he may take their opinion and yours upon the issue which he himself will have raised—the issue between the Peers and the People—between the privileges of the few and the rights of the many. The responsibility will be his; the results, I believe, will not be un-

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satisfactory to us. I am inclined to hope, in the words of the beautiful Church Litany which is read every Sunday, that the nobility may be 'endued with grace, wisdom, and understanding.' I trust that the House of Lords will have the 'wisdom and the understanding' to appreciate the justice of the claim which will be preferred to them, and I hope that Lord Salisbury will have the 'grace' to yield without provoking a conflict in which he cannot possibly be victorious."

Mr Chamberlain's prayer for the House of Lords was an audacious sally which delighted his fellow Radicals, but it did not help them to dislodge the Conservatives from the strong position in which they had entrenched themselves. In the earlier part of the same speech, he had argued the question on general grounds:—

"Now, we are told by some of their leaders that the Tories have no objection to the extension of the Franchise in the abstract. They never have any objection to anything in the abstract! But that does not mean that they will give any particular support to it in the concrete. At the present moment they are chiefly curious to know what is our scheme of Redistribution. This thirst for information is very creditable to their political sagacity. In the question of the Franchise you have a simple question which raises very few points of principle, and those are points which can be easily and quickly decided. It is a question on which you may say practically the whole Liberal Party are agreed. If you can only contrive to tack to it another question, very complicated and difficult, on the details of which difference of opinion may very naturally arise, then there is a chance that both questions may be got rid of together. We have had some painful

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experience in reference to this particular question. In 1866, under Lord John Russell, the Liberal Government brought in a simple Extension of the Franchise Bill, and the same question arose. A 'cave' was formed in the Liberal ranks, and a Resolution was brought forward demanding that the Government should disclose their scheme of Redistribution. That Resolution was very nearly carried; the Government only obtained a majority of five. Accordingly, their hands were forced, and they were compelled to bring in a Redistribution Bill. The moment they brought in that Bill their majority of five was changed to a minority of eleven. They were beaten on an important amendment, they resigned, and the Tories came into office.

"You know what followed; Mr Disraeli educated his Party, and gave us, with the assistance of Liberals in Parliament, Household Suffrage in the Boroughs and a great extension of the Franchise in the Counties; but the scheme of Redistribution was miserably inadequate—a perfect fraud on the Constituencies. It was accompanied by that three-cornered vote which has already destroyed political life in many of our counties and nullified the popular voice in some of our greatest towns. That experience is not encouraging for a repetition of it. For my own part, I am not credulous enough to believe that the Tory Opposition will be conciliated by any proposals for Redistribution which we can bring forward. On the other hand, it would enormously strengthen their hands if we gave them all the opportunities for discussion and obstruction which a Redistribution Bill would involve. The two questions are, to my mind, independent and distinct. There are two benefits to be conferred on the people of this country, two

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wrongs to be redressed. The first is an injustice which is done to many of our fellow-countrymen who have no votes at all; the second is an injustice done to those who have votes and whose political influence is nullified by the excessive weight and power given to the smaller Constituencies.

"It may, and probably would, be impossible to carry both these Reforms in a single Session; but why not carry one of them? Why should we delay giving a vote to men who are absolutely at the present moment outside the pale of the Constitution, because we have not yet agreed among ourselves as to the machinery by which we will endeavour to estimate the proportionate weight and value of the vote which should be given? There is another argument in favour of separation. It is a practical argument; until you have given the vote, and until you have got the new register, it is absolutely impossible—there are no means at our disposal for knowing—what the numbers in the new Constituencies will be, and until we have that essential information how is it possible that any really satisfactory scheme of Redistribution can be prepared? Altogether, I would venture to submit that this is a matter, not in any sense of principle, but a matter of Parliamentary tactics. Those who are honestly anxious for Reform should do all they can to secure it step by step. Those who are opposed to Reform in any shape, but are afraid of saying so, will no doubt be very wise if they can contrive to jumble the two questions up together, so that the one that is plain and simple may be overlaid and stifled in the embraces of the one that is difficult and complex.

"But suppose that we have decided to introduce the Franchise Bill alone, and to introduce it at

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the beginning of the Session, there still remain one or two important matters upon which it is right that the people of this country should make up their minds. In the first place, what is the extension to be? I observed the other day that Lord Salisbury said that for his part he was opposed to this perpetual tinkering with the Constitution. Well, I agree entirely with Lord Salisbury, and that is such a rare pleasure that I am inclined to make the most of it. But I believe that, unfortunately, although we are agreed upon the principle, we differ altogether as to the application of it. Lord Salisbury, I suppose, would avoid tinkering with the Constitution by letting the Constitution alone until it falls to pieces. I, on the contrary, would deal with the Constitution so effectually that it would never again require amending. I have never concealed my opinion—I have expressed it on many occasions — in favour of absolute Manhood Suffrage. As the basis of our electoral system, it would be of immense advantage in getting rid of difficulties about registration which have practically nullified the Lodger Vote in many large towns, and I believe it would be Conservative in the best and truest sense. The wider you lay the foundations of your liberties and institutions, the more stable those liberties and institutions will be. I have no fear of the people. I would desire to call in the largest possible number of them in order to share in the work and responsibilities of Government.

"But while I say this I am perfectly ready to admit that public opinion generally is not in favour of so considerable a change. In the large towns we are prepared for it. No doubt we see a good deal more of the people, and, seeing them closer, we are not afraid of them. But in smaller places,

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and among a different class of people, prejudices exist which time alone can remove. If I am right in my opinion, time and experience will bring conviction to all those who now doubt. Every successive alteration of the Franchise has been justified by its results; the next alteration, I doubt not, will also be justified in turn, and then it will lead naturally, and with common consent, to the change which I desire. But in the meantime I stand with the rest of the Liberal Party upon the question to which all are pledged, upon which all are agreed; and I will accept gratefully the extension of Household Suffrage to the Counties."

As the time approached for the introduction of the Bill, the controversy became more heated. On 16th January 1884, Lord Salisbury defined his attitude towards the Government Bill. Its text had not been published, but its general provisions were matter of public knowledge. Ministers had decided not to couple Extension of the Franchise with Redistribution of Seats. Therefore, he should oppose the Bill, and—he added—he did not think it would become law that year. As he had the power of making his threat good, the announcement of his purpose would have pointed to a stormy Session even if affairs in Egypt and the Soudan had not provided matter for acrimonious debate. It was not till the last day of February that the Prime Minister found an opportunity of explaining the proposals of the Government. "It was based on the broad principle laid down by Mr Gladstone that the enfranchisement of capable citizens, be they few or many—and if they be many, so much the better—is an addition to the strength of the State."

This was unexceptionable; but in reducing one anomaly it increased another. It altered

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the balance of Parties in every County, yet did not attempt to re-arrange the Divisions in proportion to the population. This was admitted by Ministers, but they argued, plausibly enough, that one great Measure of this kind was enough for a single Session. The Redistribution Bill they promised for 1885. The reply of the Opposition was that, if the Franchise Bill were passed by the Lords in 1884, they would have no voice in deciding the nature of the Redistribution Bill in 1885. Should they throw out the latter Measure when the former had become law, Parliament might be at once dissolved, and the appeal made to Constituencies flooded with electors who owed their enfranchisement to Mr Gladstone's Government. It cannot be denied that each side, from its own point of view, had a plausible case. There was no principle involved in the dispute—merely a question of tactics. Neither Party, it seemed, could afford to give way to the other. The more or less abstract arguments delivered in Parliament and elsewhere had little influence on men's minds.

Mr Chamberlain's speech in the House of Commons on 27th March was chiefly interesting for the references to Lord Randolph Churchill, a politician who had then, perhaps, attained the height of his reputation, and for whom, in spite of many personal conflicts in the House of Commons and at Birmingham, he entertained a warm admiration:—

"I should like to quote the opinion of a Statesman who lived fifty years ago, and who took a great interest in the subject of Reform—the first Lord Durham. In 1836 he said:—'It is the duty of a wise Statesman to examine the objects the people have in view and have determined to

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obtain, and when he is satisfied of their justice he should not wait to be forced to the adoption of such measures; he should not do it upon expediency or upon compulsion; but he should grant them freely and cordially, for a boon granted on compulsion loses half its grace and half its value.' I have quoted that opinion of one of the elder generation of Statesmen because I want to contrast it with the opinion of one of our modern Statesmen—the latest product and most satisfactory development of that Tory Democracy of which we shall hear a good deal in the future, which is represented in this House by the noble lord the member for Woodstock (Lord R. Churchill). It is an utterance of the noble lord to which I propose to direct attention. I pay the greatest attention to everything he says, for two reasons—first, because I believe he always says what he means, and means what he says; and secondly, because I find that what he says to-day his Leaders say to-morrow; they follow with halting steps, somewhat unwillingly, but they always follow him; they may not like the prescription he makes up for them, but they always swallow it. Speaking at Edinburgh on 19th December 1883, he said:—

"'If I saw the agricultural labourers of Great Britain in a great state of excitement over this question, if I saw them holding vast meetings, collecting together from all parts of England, neglecting their work, contributing from their scanty funds, marching on London, tearing down the railings of Hyde Park, engaging the police, and even the military, I should say to myself: these men have great grievances which have not been represented in Parliament, or which have been neglected by Parliament, and they know that if

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they had the Franchise these grievances would be no longer neglected, but they would be represented and remedied. They have made up their minds to have the vote; they have shown pretty well they will know how to use it; and if we wish for peace, order, and stability, we must give it them. On these grounds only I consent to equalise the position of the agricultural labourer and the town artisan.'

"I must say that this is a very remarkable utterance, and it appears to me to be a direct incitement to outrage. If it had been made in Ireland by an Irish member, I feel certain that it would have been denounced from those benches as a direct provocation to crime and disorder. I am not quite certain whether the Government might not have found it necessary to prosecute. But all I can say is, that I protest absolutely and entirely against language of that kind, and I think it is a fatal lesson to teach the people of this country, or any class in this country, that the only way by which they can obtain redress of their grievances is by violence, pulling down railings, and engaging the police. Although there has been no riot up to this time—nothing to satisfy the noble lord—yet I think there have been ample signs of the opinion of the country and of the interest taken in the question. The last Recess was distinguished above most Recesses by the activity of debate, and I must say that our opponents were more active than we were. I am not going to lay stress upon our meetings. You say they arose from a mere mechanical agitation. Meetings of thousands of representatives from all parts of the country, and meetings equally numerous in localities, are regarded as the creatures of the Caucus, while the meetings of the Constitutional Committee held in public-

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houses are recognised as the free and full expression of public opinion. They are the expression of public-house opinion, I have no doubt. But at these meetings, whether held in the open air or in public-houses, in not a single instance throughout the whole of the Recess has there been a solitary resolution passed condemning the Extension of the Franchise.

"Why, if the country cared nothing about the measure, do you not propound a Resolution calling upon Parliament to discharge this question and attend to other business? If honourable gentlemen are in doubt as to the feeling of the country upon this Measure, it will probably be removed before this discussion closes. We do not get up outrages to order, as the right honourable gentleman, the member for Cambridge University, amiably imputed to us. That is not to our interest. It has never been to our interest to do so, nor has it ever been our policy. At the time of the late Government I am not aware that any eminent member of the Conservative Party was ever molested or even insulted by his political opponents. It was not the Prime Minister's windows that were smashed by the mob, but the windows of the right honourable gentleman who is now the Prime Minister of this country. I do not suppose that they were broken by any Liberal organisation. I have no doubt we shall be able to show the noble lord, the member for Woodstock, and the right honourable gentleman, the member for Cambridge University, that the opinion of the country is made up in reference to this matter.

. . . . . .

"The noble lord spoke of a blank cheque drawn for 'two millions.' That cheque is not drawn to my order. I am flattered by the good opinion

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the noble lord expresses of my influence; but his argument comes to this—he refuses to give the Franchise to any one who he is not certain will support the Conservative Party. The noble lord referred to the influence the honourable member for Cork would obtain. Now, I do not think the noble lord is serious in what he says with regard to me, but I have no doubt he is sincerely afraid of the honourable member for Cork. He described the honourable member for Cork as likely to become by this Bill the great electoral authority over four-fifths of Ireland. I confess this hardly describes the present position. Nobody denied the great influence the honourable member for Cork exercises over the Constituencies of Ireland, but I am certain that this Bill will make no material change in that influence. But, whether it does or not, unless the House is prepared to abandon all idea of a Constitutional treatment of the Irish question, and all idea of a Representative system in Ireland, it is better that the Representative system there should be a reality and not a mere imposition. Many of us do not like the opinions held by the majority of the Irish people, but we cannot suppress those opinions; and under these circumstances it is to our interest that those opinions, however unpopular, should at least be represented in this House, and we should permit the people of Ireland to bring their grievances to a Constitutional test, and not force them to modes of redress to which we are most seriously opposed.

"Agitation is always legitimate so long as there are grievances to be redressed, and the grievances of Ireland are great and urgent in this matter. In Great Britain, excluding Ireland, one-tenth of the population have votes—in Ireland only one in every twenty-five; there are therefore two and a half

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times as many electors in Great Britain as there are in Ireland. The result is that the position of Ireland at the present moment with regard to the Franchise is worse now than was the position of England and Scotland before the Act of 1867. Ever since 1867 we have complained of the inadequacy of that Act for our purpose, but the Irish people have had to put up with a representation worse than that which existed before that measure became law. It is the merest folly to perpetuate inequalities of this kind, and those who attempt to maintain them are really the best friends the Irish agitators have. Our intention is clear; we have declared it in our speeches and in our Bill. Any one who looks at the Bill will see it would be very difficult to take Ireland out of it without reconstructing the Bill altogether, and that is an indication of our intention to stand by the Bill as it now appears. The honourable member for North Leicestershire referred to the demand made on the occasion of the Reform Bill of 1832. We also demand 'the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill,' and we will not accept a position which would further increase the anomalies and inequalities which now exist between the three Kingdoms, or which would maintain and perpetuate them."

Animated as the discussion appeared to be, from the beginning it was hollow. No objections that might be brought against the Bill by Conservatives in the House of Commons would shake the Liberal majority, and it was equally certain that the Measure would be rejected by the Peers. Still, the formalities of Parliament were duly observed. On the Second Reading Debate in the Lower House an Amendment was proposed by Lord John Manners that the Bill should not be

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further proceeded with until the Government had explained the full details of their Parliamentary scheme. This was, of course, defeated, the normal majority of Ministers being increased by the Nationalist vote. They had decided at the last moment to include Ireland in the Bill, and, as Lord Salisbury politely put it, had thus "squared the Irish." But this success in the Lobby (340 against 210) did not alter the real state of the case, and in Committee the Prime Minister made no attempt to conciliate opposition — in any case the Bill could not pass that Session. "We must go straight to our point," he said, "and we decline to deviate either to the right or the left for the sake of introducing theoretical improvements."

A simulacrum of interest was created when the Third Reading Stage was reached, and Mr Gladstone referred in significant terms to the impending conflict between the two Houses. He had no fear of the result, but trusted that the Peers would not bring about a collision which might have grave consequences. The attitude of Ministers was expressed in the words, "Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in, bear't that the opposed may beware of thee." Impressive as the language was in form, and much as it gained from his delivery, it did not convey the idea that he was really braced up for an assault on the Upper House. It is no secret that his attitude caused dissatisfaction among the more combative Radicals represented by Mr Chamberlain. They were "spoiling for a fight," and Mr Gladstone was determined to hold them back as long as he could. The Conservatives treated his vague menaces with open contempt, and Mr Arthur Balfour remarked that it would not be worth while to lift a finger in defence of the House of Lords

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if it were not considered capable of giving its opinion on a great Constitutional question.

When the Bill reached the Peers they made short work of it. An Amendment, identical in substance with that which had been defeated in the Lower House, was moved by Lord Cairns and carried by 205 against 146 votes. The minority represented a practically full muster of the Liberal Peers, while the Conservatives, if they had cared, might have almost doubled their majority. It was suggested by some of the Peers who had parted company with Mr Gladstone, but had not broken with their Party—like the late Duke of Argyll and Lord Cowper—that the principle of the Government Bill should be accepted by the Lords lest that House might get the reputation of being hostile to Reform, or should seem to claim the right of forcing a Dissolution. Their arguments were supported by Lord Rosebery and Archbishop Tait, who remarked that the Church trusted the people. Lord Salisbury—on whom an amiable platitude always acted as a red rag on a bull—retorted that the Church had no monopoly either of admiration for the working man or of the desire to secure his political advancement. He declined to recognise the existence of a Constitutional crisis, ignored the menaces directed against the House of Lords, and insisted on discussing the Bill as if it were quite an ordinary Measure. As for the promise of the Government to introduce a Redistribution Bill in the following Session, that would not meet the views of the Conservative Party. They wanted not a Bill, but the power of modifying an unjust one. The whole controversy could be terminated if the Government wished. They need only insert in

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their Franchise Bill a Clause providing that it should not come into operation until a Redistribution Bill had been passed. He wound up with a characteristic scoff at the high-falutin' language of the Radicals. There was a legend, he said, that the Houses of Parliament had been built by the water so that the Conservatives might escape in penny steamboats if the people should rise against them. As for the solemn warning administered by Dr Tait, he mentioned that, in the agitation of fifty years before, the Archbishop of Canterbury had been obliged to depart by a back door, because he had voted against Reform —a fact which might, perhaps, account for the alacrity with which his successor had supported the present Measure.

The mockery of the Conservative Leader—"very ill-judged it was," said the wiseacres on both sides, "in the presence of a great national crisis"—was especially irritating to Liberals who were at all behind the scenes. So much had been threatened, so little could be done. With admirable tactical skill, the two Parties had been manœuvred into inexpugnable positions. Neither could be dislodged, but neither could advance. They were like the two goats meeting on a plank too narrow for either to pass the other. This suited the Conservatives very well: they were content to remain on the defensive, and defy their enemies to "come on." But for the Liberals inaction was defeat. The only way out of an awkward position, urged the Radicals, was to give the word for an attack in force on the House of Lords. This, however, was a movement of which it was understood that Mr Gladstone was not prepared to be the leader, and without him it was hopeless.

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A meeting of the Liberal Party was convened at the Foreign Office on 10th July, and Mr Gladstone announced that while the Bill was still under discussion in the House of Lords an offer of compromise had been made to the Conservative Leaders. The Government had privately intimated that they were willing to propose an identical Resolution, both Houses declaring that "each House had passed the Bill in reliance on the promise of the Government to introduce a Redistribution Bill next Session, and to embody this Resolution in an Address to the Crown, so that all three elements of the Legislature would be in possession of this pledge." This had been refused by Lord Salisbury, who had declined, Mr Gladstone said, to "discuss the Redistribution Bill with a rope round his neck." What had happened—as appeared from the personal controversy which subsequently arose—was that Lord Granville had been sent with this proposal to Lord Cairns, who had asked him to put it into writing. When this had been done, the Conservative Leader's reply was that he would accept, not a Resolution of both Houses, but an Amendment forming part of the Bill, either to the effect that the Bill should come into operation (1) on a day to be named in a subsequent Act of Parliament, or (2) on 1st January 1886, unless an earlier date were named in an Act of Parliament to be passed next Session. This reply Mr Gladstone and Lord Granville had interpreted as a refusal of their offer, and in this view they were, no doubt, justified, though the answer left it open to them to resume negotiations.

No reference to this affair had been made in the Debate in the House of Lords, and the Conservative Leaders complained bitterly that Mr

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Gladstone had made a public disclosure of what they had understood to be confidential communications. Lord Cairns protested that he would "sooner have cut off his hand" than speak of them without permission, and Lord Salisbury said that the fight was being conducted with "poisoned weapons." Moreover, it was an "utter fabrication" to say that he had used such language as Mr Gladstone had put into his mouth, and in this repudiation he was borne out by the recollection of Lord Cairns. It must be confessed, however, that the picturesque phrase accurately represented the position which on more than one or two occasions he had taken up and defended.

The personal issue was not very important. The significant point was that not only had Mr Gladstone been anxious to arrange a peaceful compromise with the Conservatives, but also wished it to be known that such had been his disposition. At the risk of giving offence to the Radicals, who were clamouring to be led against the Peers, he decided that the better policy was to exhibit himself to the country as a moderate-minded Statesman who, before all things, desired to avoid interference with our ancient institutions. Nor was this attitude—which did, indeed, correspond with his real feeling — altogether unsuccessful. Believing that the Prime Minister's overtures had been rejected without sufficient reason, and not unwilling to undermine the authority of Lord Salisbury in the Conservative Party, Lord Wemyss arranged a small "cave" in the Upper House, and proposed at a Party Meeting, held on 15th July, that the Bill should be reconsidered by the Peers in a special Autumn Session. Lord Salisbury, of course, fought against this compromise, and when Lord

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Wemyss's Resolution was brought forward on the 17th, it was defeated by a large majority. This was the end of Mr Gladstone's attempt to settle the dispute by private or semi-private negotiations. He stood aside, therefore, and let the Radicals "go in."

On 21st July, a Grand Reform Demonstration was held in London; a large number of men, estimated by different observers at any number between 25,000 and 250,000—some of them agricultural labourers brought up from the country—assembled on the Thames embankment, and marched along Parliament Street, Whitehall, Charing Cross, Pall Mall, and Piccadilly, to Hyde Park—hooting the Enemies of Liberty whom they saw sniggering from the Club windows on the line of route. Lord Salisbury was not the man to spare his ridicule. Speaking at Sheffield next day, he declared that the Lords had only done their duty in preventing Ministers from manipulating the Constituencies for their own advantage. The existing House of Commons was the most servile ever assembled at Westminster—servile to Mr Gladstone, and servile to the Caucus. Ministers dared not appeal to the country on their quarrel with the Lords, because they would have to face a reckoning for all their mismanagement of affairs both at home and abroad—deluded hopes, broken promises, unnecessary bloodshed, injury to national power and prestige, a distracted Empire, and a discontented Ireland. Now they were descending to the streets and asking for processions. They imagined that 30,000 Radicals going to amuse themselves in London would be taken as the opinion of the country. A Party might speak by processions and demonstrations: a nation could only speak at the polling booths. Any attempt

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to substitute a counterfeit voice manufactured by the Caucus would be indignantly repudiated when the people had an opportunity of using their real voice.

Lord Salisbury's references to the Caucus were meant and accepted as a direct challenge to Mr Chamberlain, who was now the recognised Leader of the agitation, the fighting General, more or less under the orders of the Prime Minister. He was the Osman Digna, it was said, to Mr Gladstone's Mahdi. He lost no time in making his reply to Lord Salisbury's attack. At the Devonshire Club, on the following evening, he delivered one of his most characteristic speeches :—

"Lord Salisbury," he said, "devoted himself last night to explaining his contempt for the great demonstration which filed past these windows last Monday—the most remarkable demonstration, I believe, which has been known in the history of Europe. What is his complaint of it? He says it was so orderly, so good-tempered, so good-humoured. Does he wish that future demonstrations should be otherwise? I wish, when he next speaks, that he would be a little more explicit, and tell us what kind and what amount of violent pressure he requires, and what is the nature of the demonstration that will convince him of the unwisdom of further resistance. Speaking as he did at a great Party Meeting at Sheffield, limited by ticketed invitations, as all such Meetings are, he thought fit to denounce the opinion of the streets, and to declare that it was manufactured by the Caucus. I expect Lord Salisbury would be very glad to know the secret of the manufacture. Lord Salisbury denouncing the Caucus —Lord Salisbury, who is the chief and patron of the Conservative organisation of whose internal

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proceedings we have had so much information lately, owing to Party dissensions—Lord Salisbury denouncing the machinery by which he does not scruple to profit—that is a spectacle more edifying than anything since Satan was seen denouncing sin.

"You have all seen, no doubt, the amusing Circular which proceeded a few days ago from the Central Conservative Association, over which I believe Lord Salisbury presides, and in connection with which, at all events, he is a leading spirit. In this Circular the secretary of the Central Conservative Association urges all local Centres and local Clubs not to hold public meetings—he is too wise for that—but to meet *in camerâ*, and to pass one or other of a batch of Resolutions which this universal provider of machine-made agitation and opinion offers to their choice. His stock is of the most varied character, to suit all tastes and circumstances, and adequate for every contingency. He has Resolutions which express cordial appreciation of the extension of the Franchise, and others which avoid all mention of that delicate subject. He has Resolutions emphatically approving the patriotic action of the House of Lords, and other Resolutions indignantly condemning the perfidy and misgovernment of Her Majesty's Government. All this cordiality and emphasis of indignation is sent out wholesale from the stores at St Stephen's Chambers, to be returned by the halfpenny post as the free expression of an uncontrollable manifestation of popular emotion.

"I want to call your attention to the fact, that not only has the Franchise Bill been rejected, but Lord Salisbury, who is the author of that great blow to popular representation, adds insult to injury. He insults our intelligence by asking us

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to believe that his action is really dictated by his friendship to the principle of the Measure. We are asked seriously to accept from him the assurance that this chastening process to which we have to submit is really the result of an unalloyed love which the Tories have for popular representation, and that if the Bill has been stifled in the House of Lords, this has been due to the embraces of its too ardent admirers.

. . . . . .

"Well, gentlemen, there is another argument which, to my mind, is conclusive against our acceptance of Lord Salisbury's protestations of his desire for the extension of the Franchise. He says that he insists upon an appeal to the country. What country does he want to appeal to? If he trusts the people, and, above all, if he trusts those two millions of capable citizens who are now waiting for their enfranchisement, why does he seek to exclude them from the appeal which he wishes? Their capacity is no longer in question. All Parties acknowledge that they are entitled to their political rights. Why, then, should they not be allowed to take their proper place in the tribunal to which in the last resort an appeal is to be made? Lord Salisbury desires, for reasons which every one can understand, to appeal to a limited electorate. He wants to appeal to the three millions who have the vote against the two millions who have it not—to the twelve-pounder in the counties against their less fortunate fellow-citizens—to the farmers against the labourers, to the residents in the villas against the population who dwell in the suburbs. He wants the three millions of the present voters to be allowed to decide in what way, and to what extent, and under what conditions, the new voters shall come into their Constitutional rights. 'Oh, but,'

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he says, 'I do not object to the Franchise; I only object to the Franchise without Redistribution.' Well, he suspects us, it appears, of a desire so to manipulate the Constituencies as to gain a great Party advantage. I dare say his own experience suggests a foundation for such a suspicion. I do not complain of it; I heartily reciprocate it. I think we have better reason for suspecting the Party which gave us the sham and fraudulent Redistribution of 1867 than the country has for suspecting the Party which gave the great and generous Measure of 1832.

"But assume for a moment that he is right—assume that the Government is animated by the motives which he does not hesitate to ascribe to us—even then, I ask, why does he fear to allow those two millions of capable citizens to have a voice in the settlement of this question? But no; he shows his trust in the People by refusing to allow them any voice whatever in a matter which is of the greatest concern to them. He will not trust them with the Vote unless he can be assured beforehand that they will only exercise it under conditions which will leave unweakened the existing sources of authority and power. He will delay this great boon, if he is allowed to do so, until he can nullify its advantage and minimise its value. I do not think it is necessary to press the argument any further. One great advantage from this agitation upon which we are entering is that we shall educate the new voters before they are called upon to exercise their political rights. They will learn to distinguish their friends from their foes. They will not be slow to see the difference between Tory professions and Liberal performances."

Not for many years had platform oratory been

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so copious and truculent as it was in the early autumn of 1884. If Lord Salisbury was the most exasperating speaker on his own side, Mr Chamberlain on the other was most menacing in tone. One of his best-known utterances was delivered at Denbigh on 20th October. It was not merely an indictment of the Peers: it was also interpreted as an attack on Landed Property, and it contained the often-quoted and frequently misquoted "Doctrine of Ransom":—

"Are the Lords to dictate to us, the People of England? Are the Lords to dictate to us the laws which we shall make and the way in which we shall bring them in? Are you going to be governed by yourselves? Or will you submit to an Oligarchy which is a mere accident of birth? Your ancestors resisted Kings and abated the pride of Monarchs, and it is inconceivable that you should be so careless of your great heritage as to submit your liberties to this miserable minority of individuals who rest their claims upon privilege and upon accident. I saw the other day that Sir Stafford Northcote, when speaking in the North, said that I never spoke about the House of Lords without showing that I was animated by spite against that Assembly. I must say I think that a very unnecessary observation, and if I had not great respect for Sir Stafford Northcote I should say it was a very silly one. Why should I have any spite against the House of Lords? I have always thought that it was a very picturesque institution, attractive from its connection with the history of our country. I have no desire to see dull uniformity in social life; and I am rather thankful than otherwise to gentlemen who will take the trouble of wearing robes and coronets, and who will keep up a certain state and splendour

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which is very pleasing to look upon. They are ancient monuments, and I, for one, should be very sorry to deface them; but, gentlemen, I do not admit that we can build upon these interesting ruins the foundations of our Government. I cannot allow that these antiquities should control the destinies of a free Empire; and when they press their claims without discretion and without moderation, when they press them to an extreme which their predecessors never contemplated, I say they provoke inquiry and controversy which cannot but end in their humiliation. I have read somewhere the saying of a certain Rumbold, who was a Puritan soldier in the time of the Stuarts, to the effect that he would believe in hereditary legislators when he found that men were born into the world, some of them with saddles on their backs, and others with bits and spurs ready to ride them. That is a condition which has not yet been fulfilled, and I do not think that the men who desire to preserve the authority of the Peers are wise if they push that authority so far as to set people thinking what grounds we have for giving them any authority at all, and how they have used the authority they at present possess.

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"Now, the American Senate does not rest upon hereditary privileges. It is an elected assembly and, therefore, it is evident that Lord Salisbury in his secret heart—for I cannot help thinking this expression dropped out from him unawares—is willing at once to abandon hereditary rights as a condition for the formation of a Second Chamber. Then, gentlemen, he and I are at one. The Tory Peer and the Radical Commoner are agreed, although I think we should differ seriously when we came to consider what substitute should be

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found for an Assembly which Lord Salisbury is willing to abolish. But it follows from this, that if Lord Salisbury is leading the Peers to their ruin he is doing it with his eyes open. He is, I suppose, so powerful a man that he feels ashamed to rest his claims to public influence upon inherited accident. I admire that tone of mind. I am glad to see that if he be pulling the House of Lords about his ears he has no regard of the consequences. I wonder what his fellow Peers think of this. They are not all of them so well able to take care of themselves as Lord Salisbury is. And I wonder whether they will find compensation for their extinction in the fact that their Leader will appear in the disguise of an American Senator. I hear a gentleman say, 'That is their affair, not ours.' Our business, gentlemen, is, in view of the pretensions which have been put forward in their name, to examine how they have fulfilled the trust which has been reposed in them up to the present time.

"I have asked again and again in the course of this controversy, and I have never been able to get an answer, what single contribution the Peers have made to the national progress and liberty. The only reply I have had was from an Irish Peer, and he referred me to Magna Charta. That is a long way back to go for a character. I think we may call for some later testimonials. We, however, call in vain. The chronicles of the House of Lords are one long record of concessions delayed until they have lost their grace, of rights denied until extorted from their fears. It has been a history of one long contest between the representatives of Privilege and the representatives of Popular Rights, and during this time the Lords

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have perverted, delayed, and denied justice until at last they gave grudgingly and churlishly what they could no longer withhold. In the meantime what mischief has been wrought, what evils have been developed that might have been stayed in their inceptions, what wrongs have been inflicted and endured that ought long ago to have been remedied! We are told that the object of the Second Chamber is to stay the gusts of popular agitation and to give the nation time for reflection. I defy any student of history to point to one single case in which the House of Lords has ever stayed the gust of public passion, or checked a foolish popular impulse. They have given us time for reflection often enough, and the only result of that reflection has been to excite feelings of regret and indignation at the waste of time, and at the obstacles which have been unnecessarily interposed between the nation and some great and useful public reform.

. . . . . .

"Now, gentlemen, I turn to the last point upon which I propose to address you. What is to be the nature of the domestic legislation of the future? I cannot help thinking that it will be more directed to what are called social subjects than has hitherto been the case. How to promote the greater happiness of the masses of the people, how to increase their enjoyment of life, that is the problem of the future; and just as there are politicians who would occupy all the world and leave nothing for the ambition of anybody else, so we have their counterpart at home in the men who, having already annexed everything that is worth having, expect everybody else to be content with the crumbs that fall from their table. If you will go back to the early history of our social system you

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will find that when our social arrangements first began to shape themselves, every man was born into the world with Natural Rights, with a right to a share in the great inheritance of the community, with a right to a part of the land of his birth. But all those rights have passed away. The common rights of ownership have disappeared. Some of them have been sold; some of them have been given away by people who had no right to dispose of them; some of them have been lost through apathy and ignorance; some have been destroyed by fraud; and some have been acquired by violence. Private ownership has taken the place of these communal rights, and this system has become so interwoven with our habits and usages, it has been so sanctioned by Law and protected by custom, that it might be very difficult and perhaps impossible to reverse it. But then, I ask, what ransom will Property pay for the security which it enjoys? What substitute will it find for the Natural Rights which have ceased to be recognised? Society is banded together in order to protect itself against the instincts of those of its members who would make very short work of private ownership if they were left alone. That is all very well, but I maintain that society owes to these men something more than mere toleration in return for the restrictions which it places upon their liberty of action.

"There is a doctrine in many men's mouths, and in few men's practice, that Property has obligations as well as rights. I think in the future we shall hear a great deal more about the obligations of Property, and we shall not hear quite so much about its rights."

These and similar phrases which Mr Chamberlain threw off—sometimes in the heat of contro-

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versy, but more often as the expression of deliberate opinions — were greeted with delight by the Conservatives, who pointed to them as the *reductio ad absurdum* of Radical principles. Moreover, they awakened a corresponding disquietude among Moderate Liberals, who did not care to be associated with such theories as those which Mr Chamberlain was promulgating. Nor did they see that any progress was being made in bringing the House of Lords to a more accommodating temper. The Prime Minister himself, who leaned towards compromise if he could but escape confession of defeat, was coming round to their way of thinking. It was, no doubt, with his authority that Lord Hartington, speaking at Rawtenstall on 4th October, had thrown out the first hint of an altered policy. It was, he said, "not impossible" that the Franchise Bill should be associated with a Redistribution Bill if the Peers—on seeing the draft of the latter Measure and being satisfied that it was reasonable—would reconsider the former. It was in accordance with Party etiquette that Lord Hartington should add that his suggestion was "quite unofficial," though he thought that in his opinion it contained "some of the elements of a compromise."

But this was not compromise. It was surrender. What Lord Hartington was now offering was exactly what Lord Salisbury had demanded—exactly what the Radicals had declared should never be conceded. They had been agitating up and down the country against making any terms with the Conservatives, and declaring that, rather than give way, they would destroy the House of Lords—either mend it or end it. But, humiliating as the position was, there seemed to

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be no way out of it. Unless something quite unforeseen were to occur, there was nothing to be done but to disguise, so far as possible, the completeness of the defeat—to raise a cloud of dust, and retire with all convenient despatch. It was not very glorious strategy, but, to all appearance, there was no alternative. Mr Chamberlain, therefore, speaking at Hanley on 7th October, protested that it was impossible to yield to "Lord Salisbury's arrogant proposals"—so long as he maintained his present attitude. It was impossible to have any transactions with a Statesman whose attitude was so overbearing. But there were moderate men among the Tories who would follow him no longer if they were satisfied that the Redistribution Bill to be proposed by the Government was an equitable scheme. Every attention should be paid to such men: they would be given every information and assurance which they could fairly require. Ministers, however, must not jeopardise the Franchise Bill. "The prime condition must be—the Franchise Bill shall be passed. We cannot play with the rights of two millions of people. We cannot tamper with the hopes that have been excited. It is said that the Lords will not give way. Then, I say, neither will the People submit."

As a matter of fact, the concession which was to be made to the "moderate Tories" could not be made without also making it to Lord Salisbury, and the favour to be accorded to them was the very limit of his demands. Nor was it likely that the Lords would refuse to "give way"—they were to get their own way! Of this nobody was more painfully aware than Mr Chamberlain himself. Yet it was only natural that, as "a first-class fighting man"—who detested the surrender that seemed

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inevitable—he should try to veil the real nature of the intended operation. The speech was an ingenious display of rhetoric. Probably it satisfied himself no more than it comforted his followers.

Just when it seemed that the Radicals would have to confess defeat, they were enabled, by a curious and unexplained accident, to escape from an open discomfiture. The Bill never was communicated either to Lord Salisbury or to the Moderate Tories. It was published to the whole country. On the very morning after Mr Chamberlain's defiant declaration, *The Standard* printed the full text of the Government measure. Technically, it was not the Bill: it was only the draft which had been framed by the small Committee — Lord Hartington, Sir Charles Dilke, and Mr Shaw Lefevre—to whom the Cabinet had entrusted the task. That the document was absolutely authentic was at once made plain by the guarded terms of the official disclaimer. It was, in fact, the text of the scheme which the Government intended to propose to Parliament, though it had not yet received the formal and collective approval of the Cabinet.

Everybody was satisfied. Lord Salisbury and the Conservatives had obtained all they desired, and they had obtained it without the Liberals having been obliged to concede it formally. How the information came to light was a question that excited much curious speculation, but both Parties were rejoiced that the crisis had been amicably disposed of.

The new controversy which arose on the merits of the Bill itself, sharp as it became, was comparatively unembarrassing. It merged seventy-two small Boroughs into County Divisions; reduced Boroughs below 40,000 population from double

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to single representation; gave 54 new members to the Counties, and 47 to various large towns, including 25 to London; extinguished the three-cornered Constituencies except the City of London, and broke up some of the great Constituencies into several Divisions.

Lord Salisbury said that the scheme aimed at reducing the power of rural districts, which already were insufficiently represented, and renewed his declaration that the Lords would not pass the Franchise Bill unless the Re-distribution Bill were largely amended. This, of course, was the signal for renewed strife, the principal speakers being Sir William Harcourt, Mr Chamberlain, and Sir Charles Dilke, on one side, against Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Randolph Churchill on the other. Lord Salisbury remarked that Ministers asked for a blank cheque, and in return offered an unsigned one. Lord Hartington replied that the Opposition refused to pass an equitable Franchise Bill unless they could get a Redistribution Bill that would suit their convenience. But, in spite of these and similar polemical exercises, it was clear, when Parliament met on 23rd October, that the fighting was practically over. Mr Arthur Balfour had been commissioned to arrange terms with Lord Hartington, and the Government agreed to take the Opposition into consultation with them on the Redistribution Bill. Upon this understanding, Lord Salisbury promised to support the Franchise Bill in the House of Lords.

The independent Radicals did not disguise their *chagrin* at the arrangement which had been concluded. Mr Labouchere, in the House of Commons, taunted the Prime Minister with having submitted to the dictates of the Peers,

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and moved a Resolution which aimed at readjusting the relations between the two Houses of Parliament. In effect and intention, though not in form, this was a censure on the Government, and it was remarked that Mr Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, though Members of the Cabinet, walked out of the House instead of voting with their colleagues.

The victory of Lord Salisbury had, indeed, been almost unqualified. It is true that he had given up his original demand that the two Bills should be proceeded with *pari passu*, but, on the other hand, he had contrived—what Ministers had opposed with equal obstinacy—that the one Measure should not be passed until a definite undertaking had been given as to the other. Speaking on the subject in Essex on 19th November, he admitted that the Conservatives had to rely on the good faith of the Government, but on this point they felt no misgivings—they were dealing with English gentlemen who were quite incapable of paltering with their pledged word. On 1st December the Redistribution Bill, which had been settled between delegates of the two Front Benches, was introduced into the House of Commons, and four days later the Franchise Bill was read for the third time by the Peers. For various reasons which need not be recalled in this connection—the foreign complications in which Ministers were involved, and the factious quarrels that sprang up among some of the Opposition Leaders—the progress of the Redistribution Bill was delayed in the House of Commons, and did not receive the Royal Assent till 25th June 1885—nearly a fortnight after the resignation of Mr Gladstone and his colleagues.

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CHAPTER VII

THE RADICAL POLICY

In order to understand the anomalous position which the Liberal Unionists came to occupy between 1886 and 1892—supporters of Lord Salisbury but not represented in his Administration—it is necessary to explain at some length the course followed by Mr Chamberlain in 1884 and 1885. At the very time when he was, unconsciously, making progress towards an offensive and defensive alliance with the Conservative Party, he was most actively engaged in denouncing their principles and deriding their traditions. When the speeches have been examined which he delivered in this period, the wonder will be, not that it was impossible for him to become a member of a Coalition Government, but that he was able to arrange and observe a practicable *modus vivendi.* Never was he more enthusiastic, or more aggressive, in his Radicalism than within a few months of the time when he was to part company with most of his old associates. No excuse is required for the copious quotations that will be made in this chapter. Mr Chamberlain's speeches are always "good reading"—especially for those who are able for the time to lay aside their political prepossessions. Those which he made while Mr Gladstone's Second Administra-

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tion was tottering towards its final collapse, and during the brief and precarious rule of Lord Salisbury's first Cabinet, were almost as much dreaded by Liberals as they were denounced by Conservatives. But they were universally read, they were written about and talked about, and, if they raised him to what many regarded as a "bad eminence," they gave him an assured place in public life. Henceforth Mr Chamberlain might be reprobated, but he could no longer be ignored—even by the most autocratic of Party Leaders. It would be untrue to say that he filled the same place in the popular mind as Mr Gladstone—who, for good or evil, stood quite apart from the other politicians of the day—but on the Liberal side there was no man who attracted the same attention as Mr Chamberlain. Lord Hartington, Mr Goschen, and the rest derived no little of their importance from the belief that they might save the country and the Party from the Radical excesses threatened by the member for Birmingham; they were commended and supported, not because they lent active force to the Liberal movement, but because it was hoped that they might act as a drag on the collective pace. It was Mr Chamberlain whom Lord Salisbury, in the vigorous campaign on which he now entered, singled out for attack. The struggle of Parties outside Parliament became something like a duel between these two equally incisive, and, in their different ways, equally effective antagonists: the controversy at one point became so acute that, although both evidently enjoyed the fray, it was almost impossible that their political hostility should not be sharpened by some personal feeling.

The right to lay down a Programme for the Liberal Party was ostentatiously disclaimed by

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Mr Chamberlain—at Ipswich, for instance, on 14th January 1885. But, though still a member of Mr Gladstone's Government, he was entitled, he thought, to define the terms on which he would continue to co-operate with the Party. There were certain social reforms which must not be excluded from consideration. He did not demand that any or all should be immediately adopted, but he did stipulate that no adverse decision should be delivered. This was the origin and explanation of what came to be known, later in the year, as the "Unauthorised Programme." It included Free Education, Graduated Taxation, the establishment of Local Self-Government in the Counties, and the extension of facilities for acquiring Allotments and Small Holdings. He would not act, it was implied, with colleagues who refused to accept, at least, the principle of these Measures. Either the Whigs must advance to this point, or the Radicals would break away from them. But the four demands of the Unauthorised Programme did not exhaust Mr Chamberlain's aspirations. So far as these have ever been defined, they will be found in "The Radical Programme"—a collection of unsigned articles which were collected and republished with a Preface by Mr Chamberlain. They included Manhood Suffrage; Equal Electoral Districts; the Payment of Members of Parliament; the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England on terms less indulgent than had been conceded to the Church of Ireland; the creation of National Councils, though not separate Parliaments, for Scotland. Ireland, and Wales, for the management of internal affairs; the Progressive Taxation both of incomes and of realised property; sweeping reforms in Land Tenure; the "Restoration" of illegally enclosed

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lands to the community; the Improvement of Labourers' Cottages, Reconstruction of Insanitary Areas, and the Compulsory Purchase of Land for Cottages, and Free Education. It should be stated that the articles were not from Mr Chamberlain's pen, but, on the whole, they represented his opinions, and he welcomed their appearance. While he expressly abstained from pledging himself to all the proposals contained in the book, he commended them to the "careful and impartial judgment" of his fellow Radicals—whom he described as "the most numerous section of the Liberal Party outside the House of Commons," and whom he expected to become "a powerful factor inside the walls of the popular Chamber." Nor was this compilation of "a definite and practical Programme for the Radical Party" intended to be a mere demonstration. "The stage of agitation has passed," he declared, "and the time for action has come." New conceptions of public duty, new developments of social enterprise, new estimates of the natural obligations of the members of the community to one another, had come into view and demanded consideration.

In short, "The Radical Programme" was intended to be a direct Manifesto against the Old Whigs and Moderate Liberals, who still exercised, Mr Chamberlain thought, an excessive influence on the councils of the Party. He had waited to issue it (July 1885) till he was released from Ministerial reticence by the defeat and resignation of the Gladstone Government, and had thus acquired a position of greater freedom and less responsibility.

If he stood on official etiquette with regard to "The Radical Programme," he had observed no such *punctilio* with regard to the Unauthorised

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Programme. Early in the year (14th January) he had made a definite demand for Free Education :—

"I think that we shall have to give a good deal more attention to what is called social legislation. We have a good deal to guide us, and much experience in that direction. Social legislation is not new. The Poor Law, for instance, is social legislation. It recognises that right to live which *The Times* now denies, and in itself is an endeavour on the part of a community to save themselves from the shame and the disgrace of allowing any of its members to starve. There are many people who propose to carry it further. We shall hear in these times of depression, I imagine, a good deal about State-aided emigration. For my own part, I do not look on this proposal with much favour. I hope it may be possible to find work and employment for our artisans at home without expatriating them against their will. The Education Act is a second instance of social legislation, and one of the most beneficent and useful. It is an endeavour to put in the hands of all an instrument whereby alone advance in life has become possible. But we have not gone far enough. We have made education compulsory, but we have omitted to make it free. And I hope that this great and necessary change will be one of the first matters to which reformers will direct their attention. On what ground do we now levy a fee? Education is given, because it is of advantage to the child, and because it is of advantage to the community, and the community ought to pay for it, and not the individual. We force a parent to give up the labour of his child at a time, perhaps, when it is almost necessary to the subsistence of

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the family. We ought not to go further and impose upon him a tax which is unfair, a tax proportioned not according to the ability of the parent to pay, but according to his necessities and wants. I cannot doubt that the example in this respect which has been set in the United States, in France, and almost throughout the Continent, will soon be imitated in our own country also."

More pointed and provocative was his reference to the newly enfranchised voters. Hitherto, he said, the great towns had exercised the chief influence on legislation. Now, the agricultural labourer had appeared on the political scene. What course he would follow, Mr Chamberlain refused to prophesy:—

"The labourer is a sealed book even to those who live in his midst, but it does not appear to me that his lot is so happy that he is likely to be contented with it without trying for some improvement. The agricultural labourer is the most pathetic figure in our whole social system. He is condemned by apparently inexorable conditions to a life of unremitting and hopeless toil, with the prospect of the Poor House as its only or probable termination. For generations he has been oppressed, ignored, defrauded, and now he will have to be reckoned with. The inarticulate voice will find expression, and we shall learn from his own lips, or from those of his representatives, what are his wants, and how he thinks to supply them. I have read somewhere of an incident on board a great passenger steamer. When the vessel was a few days out a man came to the captain and said, 'Captain, I want a berth.' 'Why,' said the captain, 'want a berth now? Where have you been all this time?' 'Oh,'

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said the man, 'I have been lying on a sick man, but he will not stand it any longer. He is getting well, and I have got to find another place.' The squire and the farmer, and sometimes the parson, have all been lying on the agricultural labourer; but he is getting well, and they will have to find some new position."

Some of the Conservatives had a remedy for Agricultural Depression—Mr James Lowther and his friends thought they could put everything right by a five-shilling Duty on Corn—though it might occasionally be raised to ten shillings, and even sometimes to fifteen! Protection was, in fact, one of those quack medicines the failure of which was always attributed to the insufficiency of the dose. No, the farmers would not follow that will-o'-the-wisp. The time would come when they would demand—as the Scotch crofters had already demanded—the application to England and Scotland of the principles of the Irish Land Act.

"I confess that for myself I do not regard that prospect with alarm. I am not afraid of the three 'F.'s' in England, Scotland, or Ireland. But the main obstacle seems to me to be in the farmers themselves. It consists, in the first place, in the way in which they play into the hands of their landlords and give them their support in propositions which would not be of the slightest advantage to the farmers themselves; and, in the second place, it is owing to the condition of existing tenancies. Most of our English farmers hold rather large farms. They have not sufficient capital, and they are dependent upon their landlords, sometimes as poor as themselves, for any improvements which it may be necessary to effect. As long as that is the case, fixity of tenure would not be of the slightest use to the farmer, who

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would find himself unable to fulfil the obligations which independence of his landlord would entail."

After referring (at Birmingham, 29th January) to the example of Lord Tollemache, who had divided an estate into a number of small farms with appropriate buildings and residences, and had found the experiment prove remunerative, he dealt with the objection that all landlords might not have the necessary capital for establishing such a system. "Well, then," he replied, "they must give place to those who have. That is why I have been anxious to call in the Local Authorities in every district, and to give them authority to take land at its fair value, and to incur expenditure in the pursuit of this enterprise. I do not think the Local Authorities would go too fast in the matter, and I do not think they would be likely to risk any considerable expenditure; but I believe that experiments would be made in many districts and under very many conditions, and that, at all events, the best of the labourers, the most active and the most energetic of the labourers, would find that natural craving which is implanted in all who have been connected with the land—that natural longing—gratified; and if the experiment were successful, it could easily have a larger development. In any case, I say that some experiment of this kind is a duty which the State owes to those who have been ousted by the action of the State or of individuals from their ancient right, and degraded to a condition which is so miserable that they fly from it on the first opportunity. I do not think that the landlords would themselves be losers by these experiments. Their chief interest in the matter is in connection with the value that would be paid for their property. I have said a fair value, and I admit that I do

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not think they have any right to expect to obtain for their land, either on sale or as rent, the extravagant sums that prevailed ten or fifteen years ago. But if they are unable to develop their property to the best advantage, if they cannot perform the obligations which attach to it, then I say they must be taught that their ownership is a trust which is limited by the supreme necessities of the nation, and they must give place to others who will do full justice to the capabilities of the land."

These principles—which, in a modified shape, have since been adopted by Conservative legislators, though without conspicuous success in the direction contemplated by Mr Chamberlain—were considered in 1885 something more than advanced. If they were associated with ideas of confiscation, the fault lay with Mr Chamberlain. How could he expect that moderate men, whether Conservatives or Liberals, would give a patient hearing even to his more practicable proposals, when they were connected with the assertion of his "Doctrine of Ransom"—a theory which he derived from the "Natural Rights of Man"—a fallacy derived from a fiction? Jack Cade had come back to life, cried the scandalised Tories! Tom Paine was preaching again!

"When our social arrangements first began to shape themselves," said Mr Chamberlain, with the calm air of a lecturer instructing his class in the rudiments of knowledge, "every man was born into the world with natural rights—with a right to share in the great inheritance of the community, with a right to a part of the land of his birth." For these utterances he was misrepresented, he said, by *The Times*, denounced by Lord Salisbury, lectured by Mr Goschen,

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scolded by the Duke of Argyll, and preached at by *The Spectator*. One of Mr Goschen's phrases —he had called the Radical Party the "Salvation Army of Politics"—stuck for a time, and drew a well-known retort:—

"To scent out difficulties in the way of every reform—that is the congenial task of a man of the world, who coldly recognises the evils from which he does not suffer himself, and reserves his chief enthusiasm for the critical examination of every proposal for their redress, and for a scathing denunciation of the poor enthusiast who will not let well alone, and who cannot preserve the serene equanimity of superior persons.

"'Well! well, it's a mercy we have men to tell us
The rights and the wrongs of these things, anyhow,
And that Providence sends us oracular fellows,
To sit on the fence and slang those at the plough.'

"Mr Goschen says that he has been told to stand aside. I do not know by whom—not by me. We cannot spare him. He performs in the Liberal Party the useful part of the skeleton at Egyptian feasts. He is there to repress our enthusiasm and to moderate our joy. But when he adopts another metaphor, and says he will swim against the stream, I admire his courage, but I have no confidence in his success; and I say he may as well attempt to swim up the Falls of Niagara as to stay the progress of the Democratic movement which he has already vainly resisted."

The Moderate Liberals were the especial object of Mr Chamberlain's political animosity. These rather than the Conservatives he recognised as the enemy. Lord Hartington had delivered a formal attack on the Radical Programme.

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"I know something of the Midland Counties in my own district" (said Mr Chamberlain). "There is not a single Liberal candidate who has not accepted some one or more points of the Radical Programme. It is, therefore, perfectly futile and ridiculous for any political Rip Van Winkle to come down from the mountain on which he has been slumbering, and to tell us that these things are to be excluded from the Liberal Programme. The world has moved on while these dreamers have been sleeping, and it would be absurd to ignore the growth of public opinion and the change in the situation which the Reform Acts have produced."

At the banquet of the Eighty Club (28th April) he expressed unmeasured contempt for the "candid friends" who, as educated and thinking persons, reserved for themselves the duty of criticising the work in which their culture and refinement prevented them from taking part! "To hear some people talk, one would suppose that this is the best of all possible worlds, and that the only thing for a Liberal to do is to cultivate his own garden for himself. I do not think that the circumstances justify the optimism of *Candide*." Political Economy, it was true, had every reason to be satisfied with itself. The aggregate wealth of the country had increased beyond every possible expectation. Capital had accumulated. Trade had advanced with giant strides.

"That is one side of the picture. But continuously and concurrently with that there are always one million, or very nearly a million, of persons in receipt of Parish relief. There are more than one million others on the verge of pauperism, who, in times of depression like these,

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and at any moment of bad trade, are subject to the most desperate privations. The whole class of the agricultural labourers of this country is never able to do more than make both ends meet, and they have to look forward in the time of illness or on the approach of old age to the workhouse as the one inevitable refuge against starvation. Tens of thousands of households do not know the luxury of milk. Children are stunted in their growth and dulled in their intellects for want of proper nourishment and proper food, and the houses of the poor are so scanty and insufficient that grievous immorality prevails, which seldom comes to the surface, but which is known to all those who move among the poor. The ordinary conditions of life among a large proportion of the population are such that common decency is absolutely impossible; and all this goes on in sight of the mansions of the rich, where undoubtedly there are people who would gladly remedy it if they could. It goes on in presence of wasteful extravagance and luxury, which bring but little pleasure to those who indulge in them, and private charity is powerless, religious organisations can do nothing, to remedy the evils which are so deep-seated in our social system."

If Mr Chamberlain was bitter in his references to the Moderate Liberals, he was contemptuous of the new Conservative Government—the "Stopgap Ministry" of Lord Salisbury—who were believed to be following, unwillingly enough, the lead of Lord Randolph Churchill, and who certainly were adopting and considering Measures which it would be difficult to reconcile with the principles they had previously professed.

"The consistency of our public life" (he said at Hackney on 24th July), "the honour of political

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controversy, the patriotism of Statesmen, which should be set above all Party considerations—these are things which in the last few weeks have been profaned, desecrated, and trampled in the mire by this crowd of hungry office-seekers who are now doing Radical work in the uniform of Tory Ministers. There is one man, at least, whom we are bound to except from this general condemnation, and that is Lord Randolph Churchill. You may approve, or you may disapprove, of his policy, but you cannot deny that at least he has been pretty consistent. He was a Tory-Democrat in Opposition, and he is a Tory-Democrat in office; and, gentlemen, I will tell you that, while I see 'Democrat' writ large in his policy, the Tory appears to me to be in infinitesimal characters. Why, this man is doing, in the heart of the Tory citadel, with the rarest audacity and courage, the work we have vainly attempted to do from outside. I admire and I am amazed at his courage and at his success. I am amazed, but I have no admiration at all when I turn to his colleagues, Lord Salisbury, Lord Carnarvon, Sir M. Hicks-Beach, Sir Richard Cross, Mr W. H. Smith, and all the rest of them, who are being dragged at the tail of Lord Randolph Churchill's policy. Meanwhile, the time-honoured traditions and principles of the Tory Party are trampled under foot and forgotten in the dust. I will say frankly that I do not like to win with such instruments as these. A Democratic Revolution is not to be accomplished by Aristocratic perverts, and I believe that what the People desire will be best carried into effect by those who can do so conscientiously and honestly, and not by those who yield their assent from purely personal or Party motives."

Mr Chamberlain had gone so far—and the

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meaning of his words, extensive as it was, had been so stretched by angry commentators—that a few days later, speaking at Hull, he thought it wise to repeat a formal disclaimer which he had made several times before. "I am not a Communist," he said, "though some people will have it that I am. Considering the difference in the character and the capacity of men, I do not believe that there can ever be an absolute equality of conditions, and I think that nothing would be more undesirable than that we should remove the stimulus to industry and thrift and exertion which is afforded by the security given to every man in the enjoyment of the fruits of his own individual exertions. I am opposed to confiscation in every shape or form, because I believe that it would destroy that security, and lessen that stimulus. But, on the other hand, I am in favour of accompanying the protection which is afforded to Property with a large and stringent interpretation of the obligations of Property."

How far he would go in Land Reform, he proceeded to define. He advocated the registration of titles, the abolition of settlements and entails, and of the custom of primogeniture in cases of intestacy. These made up what he called Free Trade in Land, and would do something to bring estates into the open market. But the farmer must also be entitled to have a Fair Rent fixed by an impartial tribunal, must be given Fixity of Tenure, and the Free Sale of his goodwill—"just like any other trader." If it was said that the English farmers did not ask for such advantages nobody would seek to impose on them benefits they did not want. But the labourers did know what they wished for. They required decent cottages and fair Allotments on equitable terms. There was no

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reason why a landlord should not be forced to meet these demands in the case of all the men required for the cultivation of his estate. The supervision of this duty should be left to the Local Authority, which should be empowered, in case of need, to acquire the land and let it out in Allotments and Small Holdings.

Such was the outline of the policy that soon became notorious under the name of "Three Acres and a Cow." Other items of the Agrarian Scheme were the expropriation of landlords who did not do their duty by the land, and restoring it to "production" (this was especially aimed at the owners of deer forests in the Scottish Highlands); unoccupied and sporting land should be "taxed at its full value"; finally, land which had been unjustly enclosed and appropriated, and endowments which had been diverted to improper uses, should be reclaimed for public purposes, and against this demand of the State it should not be lawful to set up the plea of Prescription.

Into the Crofter agitation Mr Chamberlain threw all his energy, speaking at Inverness on 15th September. On this subject his language was even less guarded and more liable to misconstruction than while he was engaged in the task—which he had recognised as practically hopeless—of whipping up the English farmers to a sense of injustice. "Let us look this fetish in the face," he said; "let us examine these sacred Rights of Property; let us see on what they are founded; and let us see whether there ought not to be some limitation to the exorbitant pretensions with which they are accompanied. . . . I have sometimes speculated on what would have happened in this country if it had been possible to establish private property in air. I have no doubt that one of our

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Kings would have conferred a monopoly upon his favourites, and there would have been slaves willing to admit this monstrous pretension, and to submit their lives and the existence of their families to the caprice of a few privileged individuals. Lawyers would have lent their skill to weave a network and to forge a chain for the human race, and there would have been some pious and devout men who would have brought the sanction of Religion in aid of these monstrous pretensions. . . . I think that the time has arrived when it behoves us to see whether we cannot prevent the abuse of Property, and whether we cannot strictly define its Rights. I have said before, and I say to-night, that I am averse to all confiscation. I do not see why a sufficient remedy should not be found without any proceedings which can fairly be described as dishonest; but when I speak of confiscation I do wish the landlords would exercise a little reciprocity." The extortion of exorbitant rents, taxing a tenant for his own improvements, invasion of public rights of way in the interest of sport—these were acts of confiscation committed by the landlords. Were the public also to be robbed with impunity?

It did not trouble Mr Chamberlain that his Programme shocked and alarmed the steady-going politicians. He delighted in the indignation he provoked!

"Lord Iddesleigh" (he said at the Victoria Hall on 24th September) "is so good-tempered, and he is such a courteous opponent, that I take in very good part the comparison he has endeavoured to institute between myself and Mr John Cade. Gentlemen, knowing as I do of what Tory misrepresentation is capable, I am inclined to think that Jack Cade was an ill-

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used and much misunderstood gentleman, who happened to have a sympathy with the poor and the oppressed, and who therefore was made the mark for the malignant hatred of the Aristocratic and land-owning classes, who combined to burlesque his opinions and to put him out of the way."

The altercations between Lord Salisbury and Mr Chamberlain were frequent and spirited—especially, as we have seen, on the Franchise agitation. The only point on which they were in agreement was mentioned by the member for Birmingham in June 1883. Both were inclined to think that social reform—though they meant very different things by that conveniently vague phrase—was more urgent than political legislation, and, even at the most Radical period in his career, Mr Chamberlain admitted that in some respects the Conservatives had done more than the Liberals for the material welfare of the working classes, though their good intentions had been frustrated by their fatal regard for the Rights of Property. On every other question Mr Chamberlain and Lord Salisbury were at direct issue. Mr Chamberlain, for instance, had attacked the Egyptian policy of Lord Salisbury, and remarked that as Prime Minister he had carried out a financial agreement which in Opposition he described as muddled and inadequate. Lord Salisbury scornfully retorted that it was an agreement to which England had set her hand, and she could not tear it up because there had been a change of Government. "I do not like to say," he went on, "what name would be applied to such a proceeding in private life." No term of contempt would be too strong for a man who backed out of a bargain because he had changed his agent. As for the doctrines of Ransom and

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Restitution, Lord Salisbury said that they were the unique possession of this country—they would not be tolerated in any other civilised land! They were not even new—they were the common property of every barbarous and uncivilised Government!

It had always been understood—and Mr Chamberlain had never denied—that he was in general sympathy with the demand for Home Rule. His intimate personal relations with some of the Nationalists in Parliament were somewhat impaired when he took an active part in strengthening the Rules of the House of Commons, so as to control the Obstruction which they had reduced to a system. On that point, and probably on that alone, he was strongly against them, but they were grateful to him for his long fight in the Cabinet against Coercion, for the part he had taken in obtaining the release of Mr Parnell, and for his advocacy of such measures as the Compensation for Disturbance and the Arrears Bills. Speaking at Swansea on 1st February 1883—when Lord Spencer and Mr Trevelyan had been sent out specially to uphold Law and Order—he expressed, as in duty bound, his confidence in their firmness, discretion, and impartiality. "But," he added, "we must not deceive ourselves." Our task in Ireland would never be completed until we had "enlisted, on the side of the English Government and People, the interest and influence of the bulk of the Irish nation." Read twenty years after they were spoken, the words are almost an empty platitude. In 1883 they amounted to a defiance of public opinion and an implied criticism of the "strong" policy recently adopted by Ministers.

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The Obstruction in Parliament, from which he had suffered as a Minister, was, he thought, an argument in favour of Home Rule. This point he brought out—a few days before the defeat of Mr Gladstone's Government—in a speech delivered to the Cobden Club :—

"We have to deal with the system under which the greatest legislative assemblage in the world has begun to lose its usefulness, and in consequence lose its influence. And that result can never be accomplished so long as the Imperial Parliament is burdened with an ever-increasing amount of petty detail with which it is incompetent to deal, and which ought to be referred to other bodies. We have also to recognise and to satisfy the national sentiment, which is in itself a praiseworthy and a patriotic and an inspiring feeling, and which both in Scotland and Ireland has led to a demand for a local control of purely domestic affairs. And these objects can only be secured, I believe, by some great measure of Devolution, by which the Imperial Parliament shall maintain its supremacy, but shall nevertheless relegate to subordinate authorities the control and administration of their local business. I believe, gentlemen, that in this way only is there any chance of our being able to remove the deeply-rooted discontent which follows as a natural consequence from the attempt of one nation to control and interfere with the domestic and the social economy of another, whose genius it does not understand, whose pressing necessities it is not in a position to appreciate, whose business it has not time to attend to, and whose prejudices and whose preferences it is impossible, even with the very best intentions, to avoid sometimes ignoring or offending. I look forward with confidence to the opportunity which

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will be afforded in the new Parliament for the consideration of this most momentous question, and I believe that in the successful accomplishment of its solution lies the only hope of the pacification of Ireland and of the maintenance of the strength and integrity of the Empire, which are in danger, which are gravely compromised, so long as an integral portion of Her Majesty's dominions can only be governed by exceptional legislation, and so long as it in consequence continues to be discontented and estranged."

About a fortnight later he declared at Holloway that the existing system of administering Irish affairs could not be long continued:—

"The pacification of Ireland at this moment depends, I believe, on the concession to Ireland of the right to govern itself in the matter of its purely domestic business. What is the alternative? Are you content, after nearly eighty years of failure, to renew once more the dreary experience of repressive legislation? It is not discreditable to us that even now it is only by unconstitutional means that we are able to secure peace and order in one portion of Her Majesty's dominions? I do not believe that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule the sister country. It is a system which is founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralised and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland, or as that which prevailed in Venice under the Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step—he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work, without being confronted with, inter-

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fered with, controlled, by an English official, appointed by a foreign Government, and without a shade or shadow of representative authority.

"I say the time has come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle. That is the work to which the new Parliament will be called, and I believe that by its successful accomplishment it will do more to secure the strength, the character, and the influence of the nation, than by the addition of any amount, however large, to the expenditure of the nation for Naval or Military purposes—that it will go further to maintain our weight in the Councils of Europe than any amount of bluster in our relations with foreign countries, and that it will do more to promote the true interests of the People of the United Kingdom than any extension of the Empire, which it is our business to govern well and wisely before we seek to multiply our responsibilities, or enlarge our obligations."

What Mr Chamberlain meant by Home Rule, and what was his attitude towards the progressive demands of Mr Parnell, are questions for a separate Chapter. It is enough to mention here that Home Rule was part of his programme for the future, and that he had actually submitted to the Cabinet a scheme for the establishment of National Councils (not only in Ireland) which he withdrew in face of the opposition offered by the Moderate Liberals. It was quite understood that, in addition to the other items of the Unauthorised Programme, he intended, in any Government of which he might hereafter become a member, to press the claims of Ireland to some sort of National Self-Government—that he was, in effect, a Home Ruler, as Home Rule was then interpreted. The

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only other well-known English Members of Parliament who shared his opinion on this subject were Sir Charles Dilke, Mr John Morley, and Sir Charles Russell (the late Lord Russell of Killowen). But though he had explained with sufficient clearness his views on the Irish question, he did not at this time bring them prominently to the front. The points which he regarded as essential were contained in the Unauthorised Programme, and if they were not conceded he announced that it would be his duty to stand aside from official Liberalism. His position was clearly stated in a speech at Bradford (1st October 1885):—

"Gentlemen, these are the proposals, simple, moderate, and practical, which I have recently been propounding in the country, and which have earned for me from Lord Iddesleigh the title of 'Jack Cade,' and from less scrupulous opponents unmeasured abuse and misrepresentation. Whether they will be included in the programme of the Liberal Party or not does not depend upon me. It does not depend upon any individual Leader, however influential and highly-placed he may be. It rests with the Constituencies themselves and their representatives. As far as I have been able to understand public opinion both in England and Scotland, there is a great and growing determination that the Primary Schools shall be free to all, and that the hindrances which stand in the way of Education shall be swept away—Education, the chief and essential instrument to all moral and material progress.

"In those country districts with which I am best acquainted, there is also a strong desire that encouragement should be given through the Local Authorities for the creation once more of that

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class of small tenants and yeomen farmers which has contributed so much to the prosperity of other lands, and which in our own at one time formed the most contented and most prosperous part of the population.

"If I am right these views will find adequate expression, and they will receive due weight and attention from the Party Leaders. If I am disappointed then my course is clear. I cannot press the views of the minority against the conclusions of the majority of the Party; but it would be, on the other hand, dishonourable in me, and lowering the high tone which ought to prevail in public life, if I, having committed myself personally, as I have done, to the expediency of these proposals, were to take my place in any Government which excluded them from its programme. In that case it will be my duty to stand aside, and to lend a loyal support to those who are carrying out reforms with which I agree, although they are unable to go with me a little further. The sacrifice will not be one of very great merit, for I have not found official life so free from care that I should be unwilling to fall back once more into the ranks, and, in a humbler position, to lend what support I can to the common cause."

The development which as a Radical he especially dreaded, and which many speculative politicians regarded as not improbable, was the formation of a strong Centre Party. It was thought that the old-fashioned Liberals, under the guidance of Lord Hartington, might be induced to co-operate with the more progressive Conservatives led by Lord Randolph Churchill. Thus it was believed—not only by outsiders—that Mr Gladstone and Mr Chamberlain might be shelved on one side, and, on the other, that Lord

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Salisbury might be given his choice between being sent about his business and acting as warming-pan for Lord Randolph Churchill. A good many feelers had been thrown out in this direction, and various intrigues had been set on foot—not without some apparent prospect of success. It would have been a development not more distasteful to the official Conservative Leaders than to Mr Chamberlain, and he did his best to avert it. Of the rank and file of the Conservatives he could believe anything evil :—

He said, "The old Tory Party with its historic traditions has disappeared. It has repudiated its name, and it has become Conservative. The Conservatives, in turn, unhappy and discontented, have been seeking for another designation, and sometimes they come before you as 'Constitutionalists,' and then they break out in a new place as 'Liberal-Conservatives.' Even this does not exhaust their kaleidoscopic changes, for many of them now, under the erratic guidance of Lord Randolph Churchill, are masquerading as Tory Democrats. What is the meaning and the object of all these numerous changes? I dare say you have heard of that immoral person who was brought up before the magistrate for having married seven wives, and who, when he was called upon for his defence, impudently said, 'It is all right; I was only trying to get a good one.' If the Tories are trying to get a good name they have been singularly unsuccessful. When a private individual assumes a number of aliases, it is not unfair to suppose that he is ashamed of his identity, and that his past life is open to suspicion. Of course it may be a sign of repentance and of grace, and we ought to be willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. It may, but it may be only

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a prelude to further misdoing. Now, the Tories have many previous convictions recorded against them. What proof is there that recent adversity has had a chastening effect?"

The danger which for the moment seemed to threaten the Radical Party from this visionary Coalition induced Mr Chamberlain to pay his first compliment to the Whigs.

"In a speech which was recently delivered at Sheffield, I observe" (he said) "that Lord Randolph Churchill devoted considerable ingenuity to pointing out the irreconcilable divergencies in the Liberal Party, and after an exhaustive criticism upon a recent speech of Lord Hartington's at Waterfoot, and after proving the incapacity and the ineptitude of the noble lord, Lord Randolph Churchill conveyed to him and to his friends a patronising invitation to leave the Party with which, by their history and their traditions, by their past services and their past sacrifices, the Whigs have been identified in order to join the Party of union, moderation, of consistency, and of patriotism, of which Lord Randolph Churchill is the most conspicuous member!"

That the manœuvres of the Tory Democrats ended in signal discomfiture was partly due to the frigid decision with which their overtures were declined by Lord Hartington and his associates. So far as the Whigs could distinguish their political antipathies, it would probably be correct to say that if they had more fear of Mr Chamberlain they had less faith in Lord Randolph Churchill. The Unauthorised Programme, even the Radical Programme, they could understand—they knew what they had to face and oppose. But what might be the next proposal of the Democratic Tories it was beyond the power of Political Man to divine.

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CHAPTER VIII*

AS A HOME RULER

THE Conservative Leaders, both before they came into office in June 1885, and for some little time afterwards, were charged by the Liberals with having arrived at a secret understanding with Mr Parnell. The support which some of them had given—much to the disgust of many members of the Party—to the Nationalist demand for an inquiry into certain details of Lord Spencer's administration of Ireland lent colour to the imputation, and thoroughly earned the censure passed by Mr Chamberlain in a speech delivered in Hackney on 24th July. He was, as we know, no apologist for Coercion, even when carried out by his own colleagues.

"I know," he said, "that Lord Spencer himself, as strongly as any man, desires to reform that system; but I say there is no difference of opinion among honourable and honest men as to the great qualities of Lord Spencer, and as to the self-sacrifice and courage with which he assumed his dangerous and thankless office, and as to the impartiality and ability, and the honesty with

* A considerable part of this and the following Chapter have been taken from *Joseph Chamberlain*, a volume by the same author, in the International Series, published in 1896 by Messrs Bliss, Sands, & Foster.

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which he endeavoured to give effect to his mission. Well, until the last few days the Tories defended Lord Spencer and Lord Spencer's administration, and they defended it most strongly on those points upon which he was supposed to be at variance with his Radical colleagues. But now all that is changed. In pursuance of the compact that they have made with the Parnellite Party—I won't call it a treaty, it is a surrender—in pursuance of this bargain, for which they were called upon to pay the price, their Leaders got up in the House of Commons the other day and separated themselves ostentatiously from Lord Spencer, from any approval of his administration, and they granted an inquiry which in itself implies a condemnation of his justice and fair play, and which brings into question the whole course of the administration of justice in Ireland. I say that by this one act the Tories have done more to lessen the authority of the Law in Ireland than all that the Radicals have said and done during the past five years—I may almost say than all that the Nationalist members themselves have said."

Later in the year, in the course of a general attack on "the men in possession," he returned to this particular charge:—

"They have been placed in their present situation by a combination which is still shrouded in impenetrable mystery. We have been solemnly assured that it is not the result of an alliance; it is not a compact; it is not a bargain which has secured for them the support of the Irish National Party in the House of Commons and in the country. No, Gentlemen, it is a fortuitous coincidence that, just on the eve of a Vote of Censure, the whole Tory Party became suddenly converted, from the policy of Repression and Coercion which

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up to that moment they had consistently advocated, to a policy of Conciliation which had previously only received the support of a few Radical members like your Chairman to-night.

"I am willing to accept the explanation, improbable as it appears at first sight, and I do so all the more willingly because their surrender to Mr Parnell is not more remarkable than their submission to English Radicals on many points of Home and Foreign Policy."

Lord Randolph Churchill, the most influential member of the Cabinet in the House of Commons, had not disguised his close relations with the Home Rulers. Rumours of the absurdly mysterious interview which — probably, at his instance—was held in London in July 1885, between Lord Carnarvon and Mr Parnell, had gained currency long before the story was related, with characteristic inaccuracy, by the Irish Leader. Of course, it had come to the ears of Mr Gladstone, and led him to believe that the other side were making a bid for the Nationalist vote. Lord Carnarvon's subsequent explanation was to the effect that his conversation with Mr Parnell was entered on with a mere desire to learn the opinions of the Irishman best entitled to speak for the majority of his countrymen; that he had expressly guarded himself against being supposed even to entertain the idea of a Statutory Parliament in Dublin, whether with or without the power of protecting Irish industries against British competition; and that Mr Parnell indulged in deliberate fabrication when he gave a contrary impression. Lord Carnarvon had, no doubt, made these formal stipulations, protesting that he spoke, as it were, "without prejudice." But it is known now that he and Lord Randolph

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Churchill led Mr Parnell to believe that they would support a moderate form of Home Rule, and press it on their colleagues. Lord Carnarvon did indeed take up the task of persuasion, but Lord Salisbury declined to consider the suggestion. But, even after the failure of the self-imposed mission to Hatfield, Lord Carnarvon expressed in writing his confident hope that in a few months he would make a convert of Lord Salisbury. The Liberal Leaders meantime—Mr Gladstone and Mr Chamberlain, in particular—were kept *au courant* with the various versions that it suited Mr Parnell to give out. They did not believe that Lord Carnarvon had been acting only for himself, or only for himself and Lord Randolph; the "Churchill legend" was then in full strength, and anything which that brilliant genius took up for the moment was supposed to represent the future policy of a docile Party; in short, it seemed that unless Mr Gladstone and his colleagues made up their minds at once they would find the Irish vote anticipated. Needless to add, this idea was carefully fostered by the half-truths and semi-confidences which Mr Parnell doled out in artfully prepared instalments.

They were confirmed in this suspicion by the first acts of the Conservative Government. Lord Spencer and Mr Trevelyan had demanded the renewal of repressive powers if they were to remain responsible for Law and Order in Ireland. Mr Gladstone's Cabinet had decided—according to the account given by the Prime Minister, "with the Queen's permission"—to abandon the Coercive Clauses of the Act, but to invest the Viceroy, by Statute, with powers to enforce, whenever and wherever necessary, the "Procedure Clauses" which "related to changes of *venue*,

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Special Juries, and Boycotting." They proposed, in fact, to dispense with the name, and maintain the reality of Coercion. It was because they had come to this determination that the Irish Party voted against them on 8th June, and drove them from office.

In striking contrast with this policy, the new Irish Executive, Lord Carnarvon and Sir William Hart Dyke, proposed to dispense with exceptional legislation. Various excuses were put forward for the new departure. It was but an experiment, Lord Carnarvon explained, and if it proved a failure it would be replaced by a permanent measure of repression. Nor could it be urged on the other side that Coercion, though administered with unflinching courage and unswerving firmness by Lord Spencer and Mr Trevelyan, had succeeded in its objects. Another argument—adapted for platform use—was that, having just "trusted the people of Ireland" in admitting them to the privileges of an extended franchise, it would be absurd for Parliament to impose new restrictions on their personal liberties. A more substantial apology was urged by Lord Salisbury, who pointed out that, at so advanced a period of the Session as that at which the Conservatives had succeeded to office, and without a majority in the House of Commons, it was by no means certain—it was, indeed, improbable—that they would succeed in carrying an adequate scheme. This, no doubt, was one, and would have been by itself a sufficient, reason. The other, equally cogent, was that Lord Randolph and his group were for the time indispensable, and could not be retained on any other terms.

It may be replied, of course, that the Conservative Leaders ought not to have assumed

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responsibility without power, or undertaken the government of the United Kingdom when they could not do their duty by Ireland. But the rejoinder would be that everything else might justly be sacrificed to the object of getting rid of an Administration which had concluded with the victorious Boers of the Transvaal the humiliating Convention of Pretoria; had thrown away, by the Evacuation of Candahar, what many experts thought the most solid result of the Afghan War; had involved us in vague and increasing liabilities in Egypt, without any compensating opportunity of making it an integral part of the Empire; had wasted English treasure in the Soudan, sent Gordon on a hopeless mission, and left him to his fate until rescue was impossible; had affronted Austria, estranged Germany, established with France a standing occasion of animosity, and brought us—through the Penjdeh bungle—to the brink of a war with Russia over a quarrel in which it was at least doubtful whether we were even in the right. This is the way in which the case might naturally present itself to the eyes of the Conservative Party, and they would have been slow to forgive their Leaders if (for the sake of a comparatively unimportant question of Irish administration) they had neglected the long-awaited moment when Mr Gladstone should be driven from power. A distinct pledge had, moreover, been given by Lord Salisbury, at the commencement of the Session, that, in the event of the Liberal Government being defeated, he and his friends would be prepared to take office.

The growing suspicion of the Liberal Leaders, that the Conservatives were acting in collusion with the Nationalists, was increased by a speech which Lord Salisbury delivered at Newport on

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7th October. There was not, in fact, a word or a phrase which could fairly be held to imply that the speaker favoured, or would even consider, any scheme of Home Rule. But it did contain an elaborate apology for the abandonment of Coercion, and the tone throughout was more conciliatory than he had recently used with regard to Irish questions. Nor is there any reason why his supporters should refuse to admit that he was anxious, at the now imminent General Election, not to have the Nationalist vote in the English Constituencies given solid to the other side. That his speech was likely to succeed in that respect was clear to the exasperated managers of the Liberal Party. They were righteously shocked at such "trafficking with disorder and disloyalty." This, of course. But the more practical question was, how should they defeat the Tory intrigue?

It was thought that in Mr Chamberlain a middle term might be found between official Liberalism and Irish Nationalism. He was not, and never had been, what would now be called a Home Ruler—*i.e.*, a politician who demands as a *minimum* the establishment of a separate Parliament and a separate Executive for Ireland, whether subject or not subject to a control exercised by the Sovereign under the advice of his Ministers. In 1885 the term was more fluid, and covered every politician ready to support the institution of any system of National Self-Government with regard to purely Irish affairs. Mr Chamberlain fell easily within this definition, and had given practical proof of his sympathy with this limited form of Home Rule.

In 1884, as we have seen, he had brought forward in the Cabinet a scheme which was very much more comprehensive than anything gener-

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ally understood by the name of Local Government. It was, in fact, a proposal to sweep away Dublin Castle, and to vest all the powers exercised by its various Departments, with others retained by Departments in London, in a National Elective Council—a body which would be regulated by Irish opinion, and would possess every power short of independent legislation. Subsidiary to this representative Council was to be a network of local elective bodies, charged with the administration of their several districts. Mr Chamberlain has declared that, at the time, he had reason to believe that these proposals would have found acceptance with the Leaders of the Nationalist Party. On this point, however, he has been subsequently contradicted by the persons to whom he referred. The truth, probably, is that such assurances had been given to him, but given without any intention of observing them. The Nationalist has yet to be born—in any country under the sun—who will confess that the time has come when he may rest and be thankful.

"No doubt," Mr Chamberlain admitted, "there would have remained the national sentiment in favour of the establishment of a separate Legislature, but if such Councils as I had suggested had been established and put in full working order, if the perpetual interference of foreign authorities had been abolished, I believe that the old sense of grievance would have gradually died out, and that a new generation would have arisen which would have been glad and willing to accept the obligation as well as the advantage which the union of the Three Kingdoms for Imperial interests is calculated to secure."

It was not likely that such a scheme would be taken up by a Cabinet half composed of Moderate

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Liberals, and depending upon a declining majority in an expiring Parliament. The proposal was rejected, and nothing would ever have been heard of it had not Mr Chamberlain himself made the disclosure. It is possible also—and more than possible—that Mr Parnell helped to wreck the plan. No sooner did he gather that something might be conceded than he raised his terms.

At a complimentary banquet, held in Dublin on 24th August, he had declared that the question of the legislative Independence of Ireland was on the point of solution. Speaking of the Dublin Parliament as established, he defined the powers which it would claim. They included a free hand with regard to the Land, the right of building up Irish industries (which meant Protection as against England), and control of public education (which might involve a sort of endowment of the Roman Catholic Religion). The Legislature would, Mr Parnell hoped, consist of a single Chamber; he did not want a House of Lords.

To this extended and apparently unexpected demand, Mr Chamberlain had replied in a speech at Warrington on 8th September: "Speaking for myself, I say that if these, and these alone, are the terms on which Mr Parnell's support is to be obtained, I will not enter into competition for it. This new programme of Mr Parnell's involves a great extension of anything that we have hitherto understood by 'Home Rule.' The powers he claims for his separate Parliament are altogether beyond anything which exists in the case of the State Legislatures of the American Union, which has hitherto been the type and model of the Irish demands; and if this claim were conceded, we might as well for ever abandon all hope of maintaining a United Kingdom. We should establish

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within less than thirty miles of our shores a new foreign country, animated from the outset with unfriendly intentions towards ourselves. A policy like that, I firmly believe, would be disastrous and ruinous to Ireland herself. It would be dangerous to the security of this country, and under these circumstances I hold that we are bound to take every step in our power to avert so great a calamity."

He could not admit that 5,000,000 Irishmen had any more right to govern themselves without regard to the rest of the United Kingdom than the 5,000,000 inhabitants of the Metropolis. "God had made us neighbours, and I would to Heaven our Rulers had made us friends. But as neighbours neither one nor the other has any right so to rule his own household as to be a source of annoyance or danger to the other. Subject to that limitation, I for my part would concede the greatest possible measure of Local Government to the Irish people, as I would concede it also to the English and the Scotch."

Mr Chamberlain still believed, as he explained at Glasgow a few weeks later, that if his scheme of a National Council for Ireland—which might be applied, if necessary, to Scotland, Wales, and even to England—had been sanctioned by Parliament it would have been thankfully accepted by Mr Parnell. "It is quite true," he added, "that Mr Parnell asks now for a great deal more, and we know who has encouraged him. But it does not follow that he would not have taken a great deal less." The sudden unreasonableness of Mr Parnell was due, Mr Chamberlain suggested, to Conservative intrigue. No sooner did they get wind of a possible concession from the Liberals than they set themselves to outbid it.

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It was a neat rejoinder, though not very convincing.

Explicit as was the Warrington speech, it was not, and was not meant to be, a definite rejection of the whole Nationalist programme—still less, to lead to an open quarrel with the Irish Leader. Mr Chamberlain congratulated him on having dwelt on "the folly, as well as the wickedness," of the cowardly crimes which had so greatly discredited the Irish cause. That fact the speaker regarded as one of "good augury," and he reaffirmed his readiness to give Ireland—as he would give England and Scotland—the "greatest possible measure of Local Government"—a phrase almost identical with that previously used by Mr Gladstone, and approvingly quoted by Mr Chamberlain (3rd June) at Birmingham—"the widest possible Self-Government" consistent with maintaining the "integrity of the Empire."

Nevertheless, the difference between what Mr Parnell would accept and what Mr Gladstone or Mr Chamberlain would grant was so sharp and clear that there seemed no chance of an arrangement being made. On the eve of the General Election, the Liberal Leader asked, at Edinburgh, for such a majority as would maintain the independence of the House of Commons, as a whole, in dealing with the Irish Question. He expressed his fervent hope that "from one end of Great Britain to the other" not a single representative would be returned who, "for one moment, would listen to any proposition tending to impair the visible and sensible Empire." Mr Parnell's reply (Liverpool, 10th November) was that English legislation should not be advanced until the Irish Question had been disposed of. He invited Mr Gladstone to formulate his offer of Limited Self-

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Government by drawing up a Constitution for Ireland—subject to the conditions and limitations for which he had stipulated to safeguard the supremacy of the Crown and the integrity of the Empire.

Mr Gladstone (17th November) noticed, but hardly answered, the challenge. Till Ireland had chosen her representatives there could not, he said, be any authoritative statement of her wishes, and without that knowledge any proposal would be made in the dark. Besides, he was not himself in an official position, and could not assume a function that properly belonged to Ministers. The meaning of all this was that Mr Gladstone refused to be "drawn." The physician would not prescribe until he had been called in. As no definite offer could be got from Mr Gladstone, Mr Parnell issued his Manifesto urging his countrymen in Great Britain to vote against the "man who coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menaces religious liberty in the school, the freedom of speech in Parliament, and promises to the country generally a repetition of the crimes and follies of the last Liberal Administration."

The result of the General Election was just that which Mr Gladstone had deprecated. The Conservatives (249) and the Home Rulers (86) amounted to 335—the exact strength of the Liberals. It would, no doubt, be easy enough to defeat the Conservative Ministry, but Mr Gladstone could not maintain himself in power if the Parnellites were to remain hostile. The Irish were practically masters of the Imperial Parliament. On 12th December, a feeler had been thrown out by the *Daily News*. It was suggested that a small committee should be formed of the leaders of both Parties, including Mr Parnell and some of

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his friends, which should consider what sort of Legislature it would be wise and safe to set up in Dublin. It was at once evident that the Conservatives would not take part in such a Conference, and on 17th December the whole situation was suddenly changed. It was announced in *The Standard* that Mr Gladstone was prepared to deal with the Home Rule Question on the following lines :—

The unity of the Empire, the authority of the Crown, and the supremacy of Imperial Parliament, were to be maintained.

An Irish Parliament was to be created, and entrusted with administrative and legislative powers.

There was to be security for the representation of minorities and the partition of Imperial charges.

A certain number of Irish members were to be nominated by the Crown.

A prompt, though ambiguous, denial was telegraphed by Mr Gladstone. The statement was not, he said, an accurate representation of his views, but was, he presumed, a speculation upon them. It had not been published with his knowledge or authority; nor was any other, beyond his own public declarations. This very qualified repudiation made it clear that the statement was substantially correct, and everybody took it for granted that Mr Gladstone had at last been converted to Home Rule.

That impression was confirmed by the statement made, the same evening, by Mr Chamberlain, at the Birmingham Reform Club :—

"I have hoped—I have expressed publicly the desire—that the two Democracies, the English and the Irish, moved by common aspiration and sym-

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pathetic appreciation, should march shoulder to shoulder along the paths of political freedom and progress. Mr Parnell, indeed, has alienated and embittered all sections of the Liberal Party; but national questions of grave importance must not be prejudiced by personal considerations. We are face to face with a very remarkable demonstration of the Irish people. They have shown that, so far as regards the great majority of them, they are earnestly in favour of a change in the administration of their Government, and of some system which would give them a larger control of their domestic affairs. Well, we ourselves, by our public declarations and by our Liberal principles, are pledged to acknowledge the substantial justice of the claim. I see in the papers some account of negotiations which are reported to have been proceeding between the leaders of the Liberal Party in England and Mr Parnell. I have had no part in any negotiations. I have expressed no approval of any scheme, and I think it very likely that the rumours which affect other prominent members of the Liberal Party may be equally groundless.

"As to Mr Gladstone," he continued, "we know what his opinion is from his public utterances. He has again and again said that the first duty of Liberal statesmen is to maintain the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of the Crown; but that, subject to that, he was prepared to give the largest possible measure of Local Government that could be conceived or proposed. Well, I entirely agree with those principles, and I have so much faith in the experience and patriotism of Mr Gladstone, that I cannot doubt that, if he should ever see his way to propose any scheme of arrangement, I shall be able conscientiously to

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give it my humble support. But it is right, it is due to the Irish people, to say that all sections of the Liberal Party, Radicals as much as Whigs, are determined that the integrity of the Empire shall be a reality, and not an empty phrase."

Mr Chamberlain once again referred to the American example, when the Northern States poured out their blood and treasure like water to preserve the Union, and "fought and won the grandest contest of our time." If Englishmen retained the courage and stubborn determination of their race, they would allow nothing to impair the effective union of the Three Kingdoms that owed allegiance to the Sovereign. But the real point of the speech came at the end. Personally, he did not think the time had arrived when the Liberals could usefully interpose. "Mr Parnell has appealed to the Tories. Let him settle accounts with his new friends. Let him test their sincerity and good-will; and if he finds he has been deceived, he will approach the Liberal Party in a spirit of reason and conciliation."

The policy of Mr Chamberlain, then, was, if possible, to throw on the Tories the odium of considering, if not conceding, Home Rule. It would draw their fangs if it could be shown that between their proposals and those of Mr Gladstone there was not a distinction of principle, but only a difference in degree. Even Mr John Morley—not an expert in the tactical side of public life, and a keen Home Ruler by sentiment and conviction—had his misgivings about its results as a practical policy. "It will stir deep passions," he said at Newcastle (21st December); "it will perhaps destroy a great Party." Clearly, it was an adventure which should either be left to Conservatives, or one in which

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they should be invited to take part. It was in pursuance of this idea that Mr Gladstone subsequently bethought him of certain informal discussions on the Irish question which he had held with Mr Balfour when they were both on a visit to the Duke of Westminster, at Eaton Hall. The result was the amusingly diplomatic correspondence* in which the astute Leader of the Opposition tried to entice the equally wary Prime Minister into an arrangement for settling the Home Rule question without reference to Party politics. There is no reason to suppose that in making this offer—politely but decisively rejected by Lord Salisbury—he was not acting in good faith. Of course, he was thinking first of his own Party, but the Conservatives also would profit if the Irish Question were cleared out of the way—especially if the House of Commons at the same time got rid of the Irish members!

There was, however, a consideration on the other side which Mr Gladstone may have overlooked. So long as Mr Parnell and his Obstructionists blocked the way, it would be impossible for Mr Gladstone and Mr Chamberlain, when next they came into office, to make much progress with a political programme that moderate men on both sides regarded with the most serious apprehensions. Against any comprehensive scheme of Radical legislation the Irish members were a more effective barrier than the House of Lords, since it was always easy to get up demonstrations against the Peers, and sometimes they would have to give way. Clearly, therefore, the Conservative Leaders—except those whom Lord Randolph had entangled in his negotiations with Mr Parnell—had no object to serve in

* P. W. Clayden's *England under the Coalition*.

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entertaining Mr Gladstone's proposal, especially as they believed that a "strong and resolute Government" was best for Ireland.

Before the meeting of Parliament in 1886, it was realised that the experiment of dispensing with Coercion had resulted in disastrous failure. The resignation of Lord Carnarvon and Sir William Hart Dyke, who had, for the time, identified themselves as Lord-Lieutenant and Chief Secretary with that policy, was accepted. Though the former office was, for the time, left in commission, Mr W. H. Smith was at once appointed to the latter, and, after a flying visit to Ireland, reported that the Executive must be armed with further powers. An intimation to that effect was inserted in the Queen's Speech, along with an unequivocal declaration against Home Rule. On 26th January the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that, on the 28th, Mr Smith would introduce, first, a Coercion Bill, for which precedence would be demanded, and then a Bill for extending the Ashbourne (or Land Purchase) Act of the previous Session. This meant, of course, that Lord Salisbury's Government would be thrown out by the joint vote of the Nationalists and Liberals as soon as a Resolution could be framed which would give the two Parties an excuse for combination. It was provided in an Amendment to the Address proposed by Mr Jesse Collings, which embodied the policy of "Three Acres and a Cow." Ministers did their best to postpone the Division, which they knew would go against them, until they had expounded their Irish policy, and had some opportunity of forcing their opponents into an explanation of their Programme. But they failed to carry their point, and an animated Debate ensued, in the course of which

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Mr Chamberlain attacked the Ministers. "We support," he said, "a hostile Amendment, in the first place, because the condition and claims of the agricultural labourers constitute one of the great questions raised at the last Election, and because it is our bounden duty to uphold those claims in Parliament; and in the second place, because we have no confidence that the Government will either do justice to the agricultural labourers or to any other question they may have to deal with."

Mr Balfour had, indeed, announced that the Government were prepared to invest the Local Authorities, constituted under their proposed Local Government Act, with the power of acquiring land for Allotments, but he expressed his doubt of the value of Small Holdings. Nor, again, did he make any suggestion—indeed, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach expressly disclaimed the idea—that their proposals would satisfy the demands of the extreme Land Reformers; the Radicals, therefore, felt that they might with a good conscience vote for Mr Collings's Amendment to the Address, expressing the regret of the House that no measures had been announced for affording facilities to agricultural labourers and others in the rural districts to obtain Allotments and Small Holdings "on equitable terms as to rent and security of tenure." This was carried by 331 votes against 252, and the Government were defeated on a question of Confidence. In the adverse majority were included 74 Nationalists, while in the minority were 18 Liberals, among them being Lord Hartington, Mr Goschen, Sir Henry James (Lord James of Hereford), Mr Courtney, and Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury). Apart from any objection they might feel

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to the particular proposition before the House, these representatives of Moderate Liberalism refused to assist Mr Gladstone in returning to power now that he was pledged to some form of Home Rule. They repudiated the principle, and felt no curiosity about the details. More uncertain was the attitude of about 70 other Liberals, of all shades of opinion, who had absented themselves from the Division.

The defeat of Lord Salisbury's Government was due to the initiative of the Radicals who had been acting under the direct influence of Mr Chamberlain. On him, then, rests the responsibility—nor has he ever sought to repudiate it—of bringing the first Home Rule Administration into power. On 28th January, Lord Salisbury's resignation was accepted by the Queen, and on the following evening Mr Gladstone received the expected summons to London.

Amongst his old colleagues who declined, or were not invited, to associate themselves with a Home Rule policy, were Lord Hartington, Mr Forster, Mr Goschen, Sir Henry James, Mr Courtney, Lord Selborne, Lord Derby, and Lord Northbrook. The new Cabinet was constituted as follows: Mr Gladstone, First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Privy Seal; Lord Herschell, Lord Chancellor; Lord Spencer, Lord President; Sir William Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr Childers, Home Secretary; Lord Rosebery, Foreign Secretary; Lord Granville, Secretary for the Colonies; Mr Campbell-Bannerman, Secretary for War; Lord Kimberley, Secretary for India; Mr George Trevelyan, Secretary for Scotland; Lord Ripon, First Lord of the Admiralty; Mr John Morley, Chief Secretary for Ireland; Mr Mundella, President of

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the Board of Trade; and Mr Chamberlain, President of the Local Government Board. Ministers outside the Cabinet were Lord Aberdeen, Viceroy of Ireland; Lord Wolverton, Postmaster-General; Sir Lyon Playfair, Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education; Mr Heneage, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Mr John Mellor became Judge Advocate General; Sir Charles Russell, Attorney General; and Sir Horace Davey, Solicitor General. The Under Secretaries were Mr Broadhurst, Home Office; Mr Bryce, Foreign Office; Mr Osborne Morgan, Colonial Office; Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, India Office; Lord Sandhurst, War Office; Mr Acland, Board of Trade; and Mr Jesse Collings, Local Government Board.

In this list it will be seen that no less than four names are included of Liberals who subsequently declared themselves Unionists—Mr Chamberlain and Mr Trevelyan in the Cabinet, and Mr Jesse Collings and Mr (now Lord) Heneage outside. The letter in which Mr Chamberlain accepted office was subsequently read out in the House of Commons, but this is, perhaps, the best place to reproduce it:—

"40 PRINCES GARDENS, S.W.,
"*January 30th*, 1886.

"MY DEAR MR GLADSTONE,—I have availed myself of the opportunity you have kindly afforded me to consider further your offer of a seat in your Government. I recognised the justice of your view that the question of Ireland is paramount to all others, and must first engage your attention. The statement of your intention to examine whether it is practicable to comply with the wishes of the majority of the Irish people, as testified by the return of eighty-five representatives of the Nationalist Party, does not go beyond your previous public declarations, while the conditions

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which you attach to the possibility of such compliance seem to me adequate, and are also in accordance with your repeated public utterances. But I have already thought it due to you to say that, according to my present judgment, it will not be found possible to reconcile these conditions with the establishment of a National Legislative Body sitting in Dublin, and I have explained my own preference for an attempt to come to terms with the Irish members on a basis of a more limited scheme of Local Government, coupled with proposals for a settlement of the Land, and, perhaps, also of the Education question. You have been kind enough, after hearing these opinions, to repeat your request that I should join your Government, and you have explained that, in this case, I shall retain 'unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection' on any scheme that may ultimately be proposed, and that the full consideration of such minor proposals as I have referred to as an alternative to any larger arrangement will not be excluded by you. On the other hand, I have no difficulty in assuring you of my readiness to give an unprejudiced examination to any more extensive proposals that may be made, with an anxious desire that the results may be more favourable than I am at present able to anticipate. In the circumstances, and with the most earnest hope that I may be able in any way to assist you in your difficult work, I beg to accept the offer you have made to submit my name to her Majesty for a post in the new Government.—I am, my dear Mr Gladstone, yours sincerely,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

This letter was, it must be admitted by those who take the least favourable view of Mr Chamberlain's subsequent actions, a clear intimation that his acceptance of office in a Home Rule Administration was merely provisional. The charge that he had only joined the Government with a view of wrecking it, that he went on board to scuttle the ship, hardly required the indignant denial which he gave it when he explained his subsequent resignation; and Mr Gladstone, who on a personal question was never wanting in magnanimity towards his

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opponents, cheered the repudiation. There was, indeed, little hope, if Mr Chamberlain really meant to stand out for the safeguards which he had postulated, that he would be able to concur in the scheme which Mr Gladstone, with the assistance of Mr John Morley, Sir Robert Hamilton, and, it has been said, of the late Lord Acton, was now preparing. It was known, in the first place, that the new Chief Secretary was chiefly bent on satisfying the aspirations of the Nationalist members, and desired, above everything else, to make the concession, not a grudging instalment, but a settlement in full.

The letter of provisional adherence was written on 30th January 1886, and it was not till 16th March that the first reasonably circumstantial rumour was circulated that Mr Chamberlain would not accept the now matured scheme. In spite of the mystery that surrounds Ministerial deliberations, it is known that the majority of the Cabinet were not consulted by the Prime Minister, except when they were invited, from time to time, to approve the successive proposals adopted by Mr Gladstone; that individual members were now and then asked their opinion on this or that point, but there was no attempt, hardly a pretence, to thresh out the scheme in full Council;* that, from the beginning, so marked an incompatibility had shown itself between the objects of Mr Morley and Mr Chamberlain, close personal friends as they still were, that Mr Gladstone abandoned the hope of bringing them into accordance; that he gave a deliberate preference to the adviser whose opinions more closely approached his own, and, after a time, paid little

* *Vide* Sir George Trevelyan's explanation in Parliament of his reasons for resigning office.

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more than a polite attention to the arguments of the other.

Mr Gladstone was, it must be confessed, in a difficult position. The faith of the Irish members was, at this time, pinned to Mr Morley; and if he were to leave the Government it was certain they would repudiate the Bill. It was also known that he must retire rather than make himself responsible for an incomplete Measure. Home Rule was the chief reason for his being called within the Cabinet. Mr Chamberlain, on the other hand, was identified with several causes all of which he was equally anxious to promote. There was, therefore, a chance—so it seemed to Mr Gladstone—that at the last moment his President of the Local Government Board might be induced, by some colourable concessions, to sink his objections to this particular Measure, rather than break with the Party to which he looked for the future accomplishment of an extensive Programme. It must also be borne in mind that Mr Gladstone was honestly convinced that the Bill was the best that could be framed—as, perhaps, it was—and that, on further consideration, so acute and reasonable a Statesman as Mr Chamberlain would be compelled to acknowledge its merits.

It is not easy to say—perhaps Mr Chamberlain himself would not assert with absolute confidence—whether there ever was any ground for such expectations; whether any further safeguards, such as Mr Gladstone might have been persuaded to incorporate in the Bill, or any limitations devised for controlling the proposed Irish Legislature, might have constituted the basis of a working compromise. We should say No if we judged simply by the speech that Mr Chamberlain

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made at the First Reading Debate, so essential seem the points of difference between what he would accept and what Ministers proposed. But it must be remembered that he stated, on this occasion, that he had resigned, not only on the Home Rule Bill, but also on the Land Purchase Bill; and, though he was checked by the Prime Minister when he touched on a Measure not yet presented to Parliament, he subsequently found an opportunity of stating his objections to the double scheme. The letter in which Mr Chamberlain's decision to leave the Government was given—a decision which he had been invited to reconsider but would not change—was dated 15th March :—

"My dear Mr Gladstone,—I have carefully considered the results of the discussion on Saturday, and I have come, with the deepest reluctance, to the conclusion that I shall not be justified in attending the meeting of the Cabinet on Tuesday, and that I must ask you to lay my resignation before the Queen. You will remember that, in accepting office, I expressed grave doubts as to the probability of my being able to support your Irish policy. Up to that time, however, no definite proposals had been formulated by you, and it was only on Saturday last that you were able to make a communication to the Cabinet on the subject. Without entering on unnecessary details, I may say that you proposed a scheme of Irish land-purchase which involved an enormous and unprecedented use of British credit, 'in order,' in your own words, 'to afford to the Irish landlord refuge and defence from a possible mode of government in Ireland which he regards as fatal to him.' This scheme, which contemplates only a trifling reduction of the judicial rents fixed before the recent fall in prices, would commit the British taxpayer to tremendous obligations, accompanied, in my opinion, with serious risk of ultimate loss. The greater part of the land of Ireland would be handed over to a new Irish elective authority, who would thus be at once the landlords and the delegates of the Irish tenants. I fear that these capacities would be found inconsistent; and that the tenants, unable or unwilling to pay the rents demanded, would speedily elect an authority pledged to give them

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relief, and to seek to recoup itself by an early repudiation of what would be described as the English tribute. With these anticipations, I was naturally anxious to know what was the object for which this risk was to be incurred, and for what form of Irish Government it was intended to pave the way. I gathered from your statements that, although your plans are not finally matured, yet you have come to the conclusion that any extension of Local Government on exclusive lines, including even the creation of a National Council or Councils, for purely Irish business, would now be entirely inadequate, and that you are convinced of the necessity for conceding a separate Legislative Assembly for Ireland, with full powers to deal with all Irish affairs. I understood that you would exclude from their competence the control of the Army and Navy, and the direction of Foreign and Colonial policy; but that you would allow them to arrange their own Customs tariff, to have entire control of the Civil Forces of the country, and even, if they thought fit, to establish a Volunteer Army. It appears to me that a proposal of this kind must be regarded as tantamount to a proposal for Separation. I think it is even worse, because it would set up an unstable and temporary form of government, which would be a source of perpetual irritation and agitation until the full demands of the Nationalist Party were conceded. The Irish Parliament would be called upon to pay three or four millions a year as its contribution to the National Debt and the Army and Navy, and it would be required in addition to pay nearly five millions a year for interest and sinking fund on the cost of Irish land. These charges would be felt to be so heavy a burden on a poor country that persistent controversy would arise thereupon, and the due fulfilment of their obligations by the new Irish authority could only be enforced by a military intervention, which would be undertaken with every disadvantage, and after all the resources of the country and the civil executive power had been surrendered to the Irish national Government. I conclude, therefore, that the policy which you propose to recommend to Parliament and the country practically amounts to a proposal that Great Britain should burden itself with an enormous addition to the National Debt, and probably also to an immediate increase of taxation, not in order to secure the closer and more effective union of the Three Kingdoms, but, on the contrary, to purchase the repeal of the Union and the practical Separation of Ireland from England and Scotland. My public utterances and my conscientious con-

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victions are absolutely opposed to such a policy, and I feel that the differences which have now been disclosed are so vital that I can no longer entertain the hope of being of service in the Government. I must, therefore, respectfully request you to take the necessary steps for relieving me of the office I have the honour to hold.—I am, yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

The date originally fixed for the introduction of the Home Rule Bill was 22nd March; then it was shifted to 1st April; and, finally, to 8th April. Up to the last moment negotiations had been kept open, and it was stated that Mr Chamberlain had submitted a counter-scheme for the establishment of a National Assembly in Dublin—free to make Bye-laws, but always subject to the Imperial Parliament; allowed to levy Rates but not Taxes; with power to manage Irish affairs, only limited by control from Westminster. Mr Gladstone, however, had gone too far to recede to such lengths as were required, and, after the letter printed above, no serious hope remained of changing the position either of the Prime Minister or his seceding colleague.

But at this time Mr Chamberlain had no thought of entering on active opposition to the Government. He was not one of the Liberals who attended the famous meeting, on 14th April, at the Opera House, organised by the Loyal and Patriotic Union. Lord Hartington was there, and Mr Goschen, and they made common cause with Lord Salisbury and Mr Smith. When the Land Bill was introduced, two days later, and Mr Chamberlain led the attack on that Measure, he admitted that since he had been a member of the Government great changes had been introduced into the Home Rule Bill. "In these changes,"

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he said, "and in the prospect of still greater changes yet to come, I rejoice to see an approximation between the views of my right honourable friend and myself, which I did not dare to hope for at the time I left the Cabinet." His objections to the Land Bill (which had also been modified in the interval) still remained in force, because, though many objectionable features had been removed, the whole policy of the Bill seemed of doubtful expediency. It was unwise to grant to Irish peasants what would not be conceded to Scotch crofters or English labourers. But, hostile as Mr Chamberlain's speech was to the actual proposal before Parliament, the general tone was one of conciliation. The conclusion was greeted with cordial cheering from the Gladstonians.

"For my own part," he said, "I recognise the spirit of conciliation with which the Government has tried to meet some of the objections which have already been taken to their scheme. I know I need not assure my right honourable friend, or my friends around me, that the differences which, unfortunately, for a time—I hope it may be only a short time—have separated me from my right honourable friend have not impaired my respect or regard for his character and abilities. I am not an irreconcilable opponent. My right honourable friend has made very considerable modifications in his Bill. All I can say is, if that movement continues, as I hope it will, I shall be delighted to be relieved from an attitude which I only assumed with the greatest reluctance, and which I can only maintain with the deepest pain and regret."

That he was not using an empty form of words, Mr Chamberlain proved by his subsequent action. He went down to his constituents in the

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Easter Recess, and delivered a searching, but not a violent, criticism of the two Bills now awaiting their fate in the House of Commons. His main purpose was, of course, to justify his action in the eyes of those who had so recently elected him as a supporter of Mr Gladstone. The conclusion of his speech was very significant. To the Land Bill he could not assent. It was, he thought, a bad Bill.

"I would sooner," he said, "go out of politics altogether than give my vote to pledge the capital of the country, and the future earnings of every man and woman in the United Kingdom, in order to modify the opposition of a small class of Irish proprietors to a scheme which, if it remains in its present form, will, I believe, infallibly lead to the separation of Ireland from England. I object, in this case, to the risk which we are asked to incur. I object, also, to the object for which we are asked to incur that risk. But, as regards the Home Rule Bill—the Bill for the Better Government of Ireland—my opposition is only conditional. I regret very much that this great Measure, involving so vast a change, such enormous risks—so vitally affecting the welfare of the Kingdom—should have been brought before Parliament without more consultation with the other Leaders of the Liberal Party, and with the members of the Liberal Party generally. I think the Bill would have benefited a good deal by fuller consideration, both in the Cabinet and in the country. But at the same time I admit that, having been introduced by so eminent a man as the Prime Minister, the question cannot be allowed to fall, the problem cannot be disregarded. The only question is as to the form which the Bill shall assume, and I think I can show you, in a few words, that, if

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certain alterations were made, all the anomalies which I have described to you, most of the objections which I have taken, would disappear. If, to begin with, the representation of Ireland at Westminster were maintained on its present footing, if Irishmen were allowed to vote and to speak on all subjects which were not specially referred to them at Dublin, then they would remain an integral part of this Imperial realm; they would have their share in its privileges, and their responsibility for its burdens. In that case the Imperial Parliament would be able to maintain its control over Imperial taxation in Ireland, and, for all Imperial purposes, the Parliament at Westminster would speak for a United Kingdom. I should like to see the case of Ulster met in some form or other. I would be glad if it were found possible to concede to Ulster—having regard to the great distinctions which I have pointed out of race, and religion, and politics—I would be glad if there could be conceded to Ulster a separate Assembly."

Mr Chamberlain was, in fact, looking forward, as he had said, when the present time of trial should be over, to a future Liberal Reunion, without embittered memories or unkind reflections, so that the great work in which the Party had been unanimous might be resumed. The spirit he displayed, not less than the arguments he brought forward, obtained from his constituents a vote of unabated confidence, which was opposed by only two dissentients. Lord Hartington, it should be noticed, had been less successful. He was invited by the Liberal Council of the Rossendale Division of Lancashire to explain his conduct in voting against Mr Jesse Collings's Amendment, as well as his attendance at the meeting held at

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Her Majesty's Theatre. After hearing his very able and temperate arguments, his constituents declined either to censure him or express approval of his course. They contented themselves with thanking him for his speech, and hoping that "such measures would be passed as would tend to the peace and prosperity of Great Britain and Ireland." The difference between the two cases was that Lord Hartington had identified himself with the Opposition, while Mr Chamberlain had only separated himself from the Government.

There was still a belief that Mr Chamberlain and his immediate followers might be induced to vote for the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill, the Debate on which had been fixed to begin at so distant a date as 10th May, in order to give time for the Liberal Associations throughout the country to bring pressure to bear on hesitating representatives. A Manifesto was issued by Mr Gladstone, on 3rd May, in which he practically intimated that the Land Bill was no longer to be an essential article of the Liberal faith, and that in the Home Rule Bill all questions of detail were subsidiary. The only important thing was to support the principle of establishing a Legislative Body in Dublin "empowered to make laws for Irish as distinguished from Imperial affairs."

The effect of this declaration was instantaneous. The obvious inference was that, to avert the threatened split in the Party, and obtain a nominal concurrence in his proposals, the Prime Minister was prepared to abandon his Measure for the Session, on condition that its principle should be accepted, and to bring forward something different on another occasion. At this moment Mr Chamberlain was nearly converted, not indeed to Home Rule as outlined in the Bill,

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but to allowing the scheme to be peacefully withdrawn after the Second Reading. He believed that its successor, if any were brought forward, would be of a comparatively innocuous and conciliatory character. At this moment, however, an attack was made on his own stronghold, the National Liberal Federation. That powerful instrument of influencing opinion and organising action had hitherto been almost in his hands. No little part of his reputation among the Liberals, and of the alarm with which he was regarded by the Conservatives, rested, we know, on his being the almost omnipotent "boss" of what was called the "Birmingham Caucus." Two days after the Prime Minister's astute Manifesto, Mr Chamberlain's influence in that body was rashly, if successfully, attacked by the official Gladstonians at a special meeting (held in London), when Mr J. E. Ellis moved, and carried by an overwhelming majority, a series of Resolutions promising unconditional support to the Government.

Mr Chamberlain was menaced at the same moment with a raid on Birmingham, but there at least he was sure of his footing. To assault him on his own ground—as has been discovered by those who have tried to undermine his authority in the Midlands—is not the way to bring him round. Still, he was above all things anxious to avert a definite rupture in the Liberal Party. At this time, and for many months to come, his object was to keep close touch with the Liberals and Radicals throughout the country, and to induce them to realise the danger of the scheme which had been so suddenly sprung upon them. If a sudden disruption of existing ties had taken place, it seemed probable that Home Rule would have become an entirely Party question, the vast

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bulk of the Liberals going one way, and the Conservatives the other; and in this case, sooner or later, the Home Rulers would have had a majority, whereas, he believed that, so long as a considerable section of the Liberal Party could be prevented from accepting the scheme in its now crystallised form, there was no chance that it would pass into law. On 6th May he wrote a letter to Mr T. H. Bolton, in which he said that "the key of the position" was to maintain the representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament, and her full responsibility for all Imperial affairs. This was not a detail that could be left to "the hazards of Committee." It was a point of "supreme importance," which must be "decided on the threshold of discussion." But if this concession were made Mr Chamberlain expressed a hope that the "present imminent danger of a fatal breach in the ranks of the Liberal Party might be happily averted." Though it is certain that this—the nearest approach that Mr Chamberlain ever made to giving way—was not brought about by what had happened in the Caucus, it is equally clear that the deceptive success of Mr John Ellis had stiffened the backs of Mr Gladstone's advisers, who induced him to refuse a demand not more exigent than several others to which he was quite ready to agree. They were possessed by the notion that they might safely defy Mr Chamberlain's influence in the country and in Parliament. They had previously reckoned his following in the House of Commons at more than fifty; now, they reduced their estimate to half-a-dozen.

The last overture made by Mr Chamberlain having been ignored, on 12th May he convened a meeting of Liberals favourable to the "Home

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Rule principle," but opposed to anything like the present Bill. It was attended by fifty-two members of the House of Commons; and on the 14th an independent meeting was summoned by Lord Hartington. Of the sixty-four who assembled at Devonshire House, thirty-two, amongst whom was Mr Chamberlain himself, had been present at the previous gathering. To the eighty-four members thus accounted for nine others had to be added, who had sent letters of sympathy; and the probability was that, eventually, the total of "Dissentient Liberals" would mount into three figures. But the important thing was that Mr Chamberlain and Lord Hartington agreed, for the time, to act together, and vote against the Second Reading. This result had been finally brought about by the long-delayed response to the demand for the retention of the Irish members at Westminster. The night before, Mr Campbell-Bannerman had been put up to say that the Government would give their most friendly consideration to any suggestion for "enabling the Irish members to take part in our discussions." But this foreshadowing of the famous "in-and-out" proposal did not meet Mr Chamberlain's objections, and when Mr Campbell-Bannerman had finished, he "put up his notes in his pocket," Mr Clayden records, "with an air of disappointment and disgust, and glancing at Mr Caine, shook his head and went away."

It has been suggested that at this time Mr Chamberlain was playing to drive Mr Gladstone into retirement, by defeating the Measure to which he had pledged himself, and to rally the bulk of the Liberals—who were by no means enamoured of Home Rule for its own sake—to the support of a Coalition Ministry of which

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Lord Hartington and himself would be the leading members. There is this much, but no more, ground for the imputation, that the possibility of a Liberal-Unionist Ministry was openly discussed in the newspapers; and as members of that imaginary Cabinet were mentioned, in addition to Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain, Mr Goschen, Sir Henry James, Mr Trevelyan, Mr Courtney, Lord Selborne, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Northbrook, Lord Carlingford, and Lord Derby. Undeniably it would have been, so far as ability goes, a strong Administration; but the project, so far as it had assumed definite shape, had to be abandoned after Lord Salisbury's speech on 15th May. He distinctly reminded the Conservatives that theirs would be the greater part of the votes to which the victory in the coming Division would be due, and plainly intimated that the responsibility of assuming office would belong to themselves, not to the allies whose help they received with a hearty welcome, and whom, in turn, they were willing to assist so far as agreement might be possible.

Even without this unmistakable hint, both Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain must have realised that it would hardly be pleasant for them, just at present, to work together in the same Administration. The memory of their previous differences in the Cabinet, of their open controversies on the platform, was still too fresh. It did not prevent them from co-operating against a common danger. No doubt they could have struck out a *modus vivendi;* but there must always have remained a certain sense of insecurity in an alliance between the typical representative of Whig principles and the exponent of the Unauthorised Programme.

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Besides, Lord Hartington was a declared Unionist; Mr Chamberlain was still, in principle, a Home Ruler, and even on the last day of May stated the case, at a Liberal-Unionist Conference, in favour of abstaining from the Division. But he accepted and endorsed, without reserve, the general opinion of the meeting, and next day pledged himself to vote against the Bill. From the speech which he delivered that evening, in pursuance of this decision, it may be interesting to extract the passage in which he defended his own action:—

"I have been assailed with extraordinary bitterness because I have exercised an independent judgment in a matter which I believe to be vital to the interests of the country. I have been told that I am animated by personal spite and private spleen. Yes; I do not complain of hon. members from Ireland taking that view and expressing it—it is their habit of controversy. No one has ever been opposed to them in politics but he has been covered with virulent abuse and misrepresentation, and none more conspicuously than Lord Spencer and the Prime Minister, whom they are now loading with fulsome adulation. But I address myself to my hon. friends round me, from whom I have the misfortune to differ. I ask them to consider whether it is really necessary to impute the basest motives to public men at a time when there are, on the surface, reasons perfectly honourable which may sufficiently account for their conduct. Do you say—do you dare to say—that my right hon. friend and colleague in the representation of Birmingham is animated by personal spleen and spite? He takes the same course as I do; he is going into the lobby against this Bill and against the friend, the associate, and the Leader, whom he

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has followed with loyal devotion for many years of his life. My right hon. friend has done as great services, he has lived almost as long in public life, as the Prime Minister himself, and no one has doubted his honour.

"But you say that I am in a different position. And why do you say that? What I am saying now I expressed in public—it is in print—before the General Election, before I was a member of the Government, before I had the slightest conception that any idea of this kind was fermenting then—if it were fermenting—in the mind of the Prime Minister. I spoke at Warrington in September 1885, and, referring to the demands of the hon. member for Cork, I said then that if there were any party or any man who was willing to yield to those demands in order to purchase his support, I would have no part in the competition. And then many of my friends whom I see around me thanked me in public for what they thought that frank, plain, and courageous declaration. And now, forsooth! for having made the same declaration some three months later, when the occasion has arisen, they accuse me of personal and unworthy motives. Sir, the charge is unjust; the charge is ridiculous. For there is not a man here who does not know that every personal and political interest would lead me to cast in my lot with the Prime Minister. Why, sir, not a day passes in which I do not receive dozens or scores of letters urging me, for my own sake, to vote for the Bill, and dish the Whigs! Well, sir, the temptation is no doubt a great one, but, after all, I am not base enough to serve my personal ambition by betraying my country; and I am convinced, when the heat of this discussion is passed, Liberals will not judge harshly those

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who have pursued what they honestly believe to be the path of duty, even though it may lead to the disruption of Party ties, and to the loss of the influence and power which it is the ambition of every man to seek among his political friends and associates."

It was evident that none of the Liberals who now formally separated themselves from Mr Gladstone stood to lose so much by that step as Mr Chamberlain: not Mr Bright, whose resignation in 1882 had practically put him outside the pale of candidates for office; not Lord Hartington, or Lord Selborne, or Mr Goschen, whose distrust of the new elements in Liberalism had been growing every year more pronounced, quite apart from Home Rule; not even Sir Henry James, who refused the highest prize of his profession, and showed that, even to an ambitious lawyer, there are higher objects than the Woolsack. But Mr Chamberlain gave up—when a little paltering with his conscience, a slight stretching of his convictions, would have enabled him to retain—not only his position as a member of the Cabinet, but also a reasonably-assured reversion of the Liberal Leadership. He turned away from this brilliant and alluring prospect at a time when he was at equally open discord with Conservatives and Moderate Liberals, and there was little probability of his being admitted into partnership with the adversaries of his late allies.

The long-deferred Division, after a Debate spread out over a month, was taken on 7th June, and Mr Gladstone was defeated by 30 votes—343 against 313, 94 Liberals having gone into the Opposition Lobby. The Prime Minister at once realised that he must either abandon Home Rule for the remaining Parliamentary term, or

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appeal to the country. It is certain that he entered on the General Election of 1886 in a very sanguine spirit. Undoubtedly, he had come to believe with all his heart in the cause which he had somewhat reluctantly taken up, and he was advised by Mr Schnadhorst (the Caucus secretary), who was admitted to a special meeting of the Cabinet, that the Irish vote in the English Constituencies would be enough to outweigh Liberal-Unionist influence. If it had not been for the ill-starred confidence with which Mr Gladstone was inspired by Mr Morley's enthusiasm and Mr Schnadhorst's calculations, he might, perhaps, even at the last moment, have patched up a sort of peace in the Liberal Party.

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CHAPTER IX

AS A UNIONIST

FROM the Election Address which Mr Chamberlain issued to his supporters in Birmingham, it will be seen that, even after having so largely contributed to Mr Gladstone's defeat, he still regarded himself as a Home Ruler, though opposed to a separate Irish Parliament. His co-operation with Whigs and Conservatives was, in his own mind, limited to resisting a particular scheme which they disliked in common. "Liberal Unionists," he said, "while determined in their opposition to a separate Parliament for Ireland, are, nevertheless, anxious to meet, as far as possible, the legitimate aspirations of the Irish people, shared, as they believe them to be, by Scotland and by Wales, for greater independence in the management of their local affairs." There were four points to be observed. First, the relief of the Imperial Parliament by the devolution of Irish local business; second, the full representation of Irish opinion on matters of local Irish concern; third, to give Irishmen a fair field for legitimate local ambition and patriotism; fourth, by removing all unnecessary interference with Irish government on the part of Great Britain, to diminish the causes of irritation and the opportunity of collision. It would be necessary to establish a complete system of Local Government

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for the Three Kingdoms; but, beyond and above a purely Municipal arrangement of this kind, a larger arrangement would be found safe and desirable, under which, subject to the concurrent and supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament, the various portions of the United Kingdom should be enabled to exercise greater influence over local administration and over legislation for their special needs and requirements. The Address concluded with a spirited protest against the attempts made to excommunicate all who were unable to repudiate in a few months the opinions and convictions of a lifetime.

Mr Chamberlain believed, not only that such a scheme might be acceptable in Great Britain, but also that, though not accepted by the Nationalist politicians, a full settlement on the above lines would put an end to the general agitation in Ireland. He declined, therefore, to join either in a common propaganda, or in a temporary fighting organisation, either with the Whig or Conservative Unionists. The improvised National Radical Union supplied all the machinery required by Mr Chamberlain and his immediate followers; and in the Birmingham district, from which his most active colleagues were drawn, the question hardly arose whether the Conservative vote should be solicited or accepted. Mr Chamberlain himself, Mr Bright, Mr George Dixon, Mr Powell Williams, and Mr W. Kenrick were returned unopposed; and in Bordesley, where Mr Jesse Collings had to fight for his seat, the majority was in the proportion of four to one. But the Liberals whose views were more nearly represented by Lord Hartington or Mr Goschen assisted, and were assisted by, the Conservatives all over the country. There was practically no conflict, hardly

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any competition, between the two Parties in the Unionist combination. The result of the General Election was that the English Gladstonians (194), with the Nationalists (85), were in a minority of 37 as compared with the Conservatives (316), without counting on either side the 75 Dissentient Liberals who followed either Lord Hartington or Mr Chamberlain. The latter, therefore, if they acted all together, were in a position either to give the Conservatives a commanding majority, or to turn them out of office at a moment's notice.

On receiving the Queen's commands to form a Ministry, Lord Salisbury's first care was to bind the Liberal Unionists to a firm alliance with the Conservatives. He carried this policy so far that, with her Majesty's permission, he offered to stand aside for Lord Hartington, and even to serve in the same Ministry. There were several reasons why Lord Hartington could not accept the offer; one was that the Conservatives, who would constitute so large a portion of the proposed Coalition, evidently would not relish the command being given to a Liberal Unionist; another was that if the Whig Unionists were represented in the Cabinet the Radical Unionists would not consent to be left out. Differing as they did on many points, Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain were agreed in the wish to use a Conservative majority to promote Liberal measures, and both believed that for the present they would exercise more influence outside the Ministry than if they gave a sort of security for allegiance by taking office with Lord Salisbury. Their own divergencies of opinion did not matter so long as they each occupied the position of an independent adviser to the Ministry. But if they were included in the same Cabinet

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they would have been forced either to sink or settle their by no means unimportant differences.

It was right that the offer should be made by Lord Salisbury, and equally right that it should be declined. Only a few months had passed since Lord Salisbury and Lord Hartington, Lord Salisbury and Mr Chamberlain, Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain, had been engaged in holding each other up to the scorn or ridicule of excited Party meetings. The betrayal of Gordon, the doctrine of Ransom, the Unauthorised Programme —these are ancient matters now; but in 1886 they were fresh in the minds of men who had been exchanging charge and counter-charge, sneers and epigrams. With the best wish in the world to let bygones be bygones, some of the barbs were still rankling; the old rivalries would soon have broken out again. The wiser thing was for each Party to make trial of the other, and afterwards, if possible—when they should have settled down to harness together—to convert their alliance into a Coalition.

The different attitudes assumed by Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain were defined at a meeting held at Devonshire House on the day of the meeting of the new Parliament (5th August). A formal hope was expressed by the former that the Liberal Party would again be united, but that could only be done if Home Rule were thrown over—a course which he seemed to regard as within the range of probability. Meantime, Liberal Unionists must support Lord Salisbury's Government; otherwise, they would defeat the very object for which they had fought at the General Election. Mr Chamberlain concurred with Lord Hartington as to the immediate duty of Liberal Unionists, but dwelt with considerable

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emphasis on the prospects of a Liberal reconciliation. He thought a basis of agreement might be found with regard to the Irish Question. As a sign that the Liberal Unionists did not consider that they had ceased to be Liberals, they should sit on the Opposition benches, alongside the Gladstonians. There was not precisely a contrast between the two speeches, but a certain difference in tone showed that one of the Dissentient Leaders was beyond negotiation, while the other was still open to compromise.

But in the Debate on the Address, whatever might be his feelings towards Mr Gladstone, Mr Chamberlain now found himself at open issue with Mr Parnell—who had moved an Amendment which was practically a vote of Censure on Ministers—and was charged by Mr Sexton with having proved more Tory than the Tories. The extravagant abuse with which he was henceforth assailed by the Nationalists was very useful to Mr Chamberlain. It made him popular with just that class of his countrymen who loathed his general opinions. There must, it was felt, be something good in a man who was so heartily abused by the Irish members. The Nationalist cause was at this time at a considerable discount in England. Many of those who sympathised with the demand for Home Rule were estranged by the Plan of Campaign. Invented by Mr Harrington, it had been taken up by Mr Dillon and Mr O'Brien—much to the disgust of Mr Parnell and some of his more cautious Irish supporters. The undisguised dishonesty of the object, and the cruel methods by which it was pursued, had shocked not a few Gladstonians who had been able to extenuate or ignore the methods by which the Land League and the

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National League had maintained their illicit authority. It is believed that some of the English Home-Rulers in Parliament might have been found in a "coming-on disposition" if they had been approached at this time by the Liberal Unionists. But the bulk of that Party were not disposed to make such overtures. A meeting was held in Willis's Rooms, at which Lord Hartington insisted that the alliance with the Conservatives must still be kept up; and a somewhat chilly reception was given to the advice, telegraphed by Mr Chamberlain from abroad, that a Conference should be proposed between the two sections of the Liberal Party with regard to concessions to Ireland.

Almost at the end of the year, the question of a formal Unionist Coalition was once again raised in a practical form. Lord Randolph Churchill had at last been taken at his word by Lord Salisbury, and his resignation was accepted. For us, who are wise after the event, it is easy to see that the Ministry were well rid of that disturbing genius. Lord Randolph hoped—what half the Conservatives in the House of Commons believed—that Lord Salisbury's Ministry were now on the point of breaking up, and that if they did not take him back on his own terms they would not survive their second Session. In spite of his remarkable abilities, and his power of getting good work from his subordinates, he was not successful as a Departmental Minister; in the Cabinet he was intractable, but the general public, who judged him purely on his public performances, knew him only as the most effective platform speaker in England and a singularly promising Leader of the House of Commons.

In order to abate a quite irrational scare, and

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restore the confidence of his demoralised followers, Lord Salisbury once again invited the co-operation of the Liberal Unionists, once again offered to serve under Lord Hartington, and once again was met with a refusal, though it was accompanied with something like a pledge of general support. The decision of Lord Hartington not to take office was warmly approved by Mr Chamberlain, whose confidence in Lord Salisbury's Administration had been severely shaken by the retirement of a politician for whom he had a warm admiration; with whom, in spite of occasional quarrels, he kept up a cordial friendship, and whom he considered easily accessible to Progressive influences. But by obtaining the assistance of Mr Goschen, who accepted the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, Lord Salisbury recruited a Statesman who was but nominally a Liberal Unionist — who was, in fact, more cautious in his policy than some who called themselves Tories. It was for his personal qualities, his political sincerity, and his financial reputation, that Mr Goschen — the man whom Lord Randolph confessed he had forgotten—was so important an accession to the strength of Lord Salisbury's Government. But his acceptance of office, though it made a sort of personal tie between Conservative Ministers and Liberal Unionists like Sir Henry James, did nothing to increase the confidence of the advanced Reformers who followed Mr Chamberlain, or even of those equally positive, though less impatient, Liberals who looked for guidance to Lord Hartington.

At the outset of Lord Salisbury's Second Administration, it is not unfair to say that the Radical and the Liberal Unionist Leaders made

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it their chief business to keep an eye on the Conservatives. They expected and insisted that, in return for the vote of their respective contingents in the House of Commons, they should be taken into consultation, and given as much voice in the settlement of policy as if they had been actually admitted into the Cabinet. After a time, both sides grew accustomed to a somewhat anomalous arrangement, and it worked with unexpected smoothness. But in passing judgment, whether favourable or depreciatory, on the conduct of the 1886-1892 Ministry, it is not right to say, "The Conservatives did this," or "The Conservatives refused to do that." Sometimes there was a concession by the minority, *e.g.*, when Lord Salisbury had his way about Tithes; sometimes—and this was, as a rule, on the more important matters—the yielding was done by the majority, as in the instance of Free Education. But, in a general way, the common policy was determined, not by surrender on either side, but by fair give-and-take.

Meantime—*i.e.*, before this understanding had been tested in practice—Mr Chamberlain confessed, at Birmingham, that Lord Randolph's resignation had weakened his faith in the Government. That politician, he considered, had risen superior to the old Tory traditions, and, now that he was gone, Mr Chamberlain feared a recourse to reactionary policy. It was this feeling which, in part, at least, made him throw out the strong hint that resulted in the Round Table Conference. The Liberals, he said, were agreed on ninety-nine parts of their programme; they disagreed only on one. Even on the Land Question they were not far apart.

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"There is the real grievance of Ireland, there is the real problem we have to solve, and, believe me, gentlemen," he said, "without solving this Land Question, Home Rule is impossible; and I believe that, if you solve it, Home Rule will be unnecessary. Are we," he asked, "far apart upon the principles which ought to guide a settlement of the Land Question? I think not. . . . I am convinced that, sitting round a table, and coming together in a spirit of compromise and conciliation, almost any three men—leaders of the Liberal Party—although they may hold opposite views upon another branch of the question, would yet be able to arrange some scheme."

Mr (now Sir) H. H. Fowler declared that this offer provided the basis of a reasonable compromise; and on 3rd January 1887, a letter from Mr Gladstone to Sir William Harcourt was published in the *Daily News*, in which it was practically accepted. Ten days later the Conference met at Sir William Harcourt's house—Sir William Harcourt and Mr Morley for the Gladstonians, Mr Chamberlain and Mr Trevelyan for the Radical Unionists, and Lord Herschell to represent the Open Mind. There is no need to go into the history of those abortive negotiations. While they were in progress — and they proceeded smoothly at first—Mr Chamberlain was as unreasonably eulogised by expectant Gladstonians as he was denounced without cause by perfervid Unionists. He had never pledged himself unconditionally to either side, and he was logically and morally quite at liberty to express—as he did—his eager hope that a reunion might be effected.

That he was mistaken is sufficiently clear. He had over-rated the importance of Lord Randolph's secession from the Ministry, and under-estimated

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the points of difference between the Home Rule and Unionist faiths, even when each had been rationalised down to the lowest working *minimum*. Already, some rash Gladstonians had begun to rejoice over his impending recantation, and he had to reply with some candid remarks about "political mischief-makers" who were trying to intimidate Liberal Unionists with "threats of political extinction."

"Let there be no mistake," he said; "we are anxious, we are eager, for reunion. We are willing to go a long way to meet our former friends. We have laid ourselves open to much misconception by making the first advance, but there are limits to the concessions which can be made, which can be demanded of us, and unless there is an equal reasonableness on the part of our former friends, upon their shoulders must rest the responsibility of the further disaster and confusion which will fall upon the Liberal Party."

Lord Hartington and Sir Henry James were not deceived, as Mr Chamberlain was—as he never would have been but for his sudden alarm for that Social Programme which has never ranked second in his mind to any other cause, except, perhaps, to that of maintaining the Union. This was, in fact, Mr Chamberlain's last effort to rejoin the Party which he had hitherto considered the one better adapted, and more disposed, to carry Progressive legislation.

It is admitted on all hands now that the purpose of this Conference was, from the beginning, an amiable mistake. It would be impossible to reconcile Sir William Harcourt's account of the understanding on which the Conference met with that given by Mr Chamberlain. Sir William's view is that the establishment of a Dublin Parlia-

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ment with an Executive dependent on it had been taken as common ground, while Mr Chamberlain contends that "not one word was said" about such a scheme. The plans discussed were very different; *e.g.*, a proposal to establish some system of Provincial Authorities (on the model of the Provincial Constitution of Canada) subordinate to Imperial Parliament, and dealing only with subjects specially referred to them, the Imperial Parliament retaining a concurrent power of making laws and levying taxes. Sir William afterwards said that the negotiations broke down because Mr Chamberlain was opposed, not to Home Rule, but to Mr Gladstone; Mr Chamberlain accounted for the collapse by saying that behind the Liberal Leaders was "a power they dared not face." Though the negotiations ended in an exchange of recriminations, they seem to have been commenced on both sides in perfectly good faith. But how was compromise possible when the delegates were pledged to contradictory opinions on such essential points as whether Imperial Parliament should be invested with an effective Veto on the legislation of an Irish Assembly? This power Mr Chamberlain was bound, by all his past expressions and present convictions, to insist upon; and Mr Morley was equally compelled, by his own genuine conversion to Home Rule, and by the demands of his Nationalist allies, to refuse.

On some other points that presented difficulty —such as the separate treatment of Ulster and the control of the Royal Irish Constabulary—a working arrangement might conceivably have been arrived at. But when a fundamental principle is involved, when both sides are sincere, and neither can be imposed upon by verbal shams,

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this kind of palaver is but waste both of time and temper. Of the former, not much was expended —a great deal of the latter. After two or three friendly meetings in January, an adjournment was made till the middle of February, at which date Sir George Trevelyan still believed that reunion might be attainable. The fact was that Sir George had been talked over, and Mr Chamberlain had not.

A few days later, the *Baptist* published an article by Mr Chamberlain, in which he showed that Home Rule was leading to the indefinite adjournment of "all Liberal reform," including the Welsh Nonconformists' demand for Disestablishment, a Measure with which he expressed the strongest sympathy. If the Welsh people, by returning twenty-three out of their thirty members to support Mr Gladstone, meant to express approval of his Irish policy, they had "no right whatever to complain of the delay of their hopes, and they must wait patiently until the country has changed its mind, and is prepared to hand over the minority in Ireland to the tender mercies of Mr Parnell and the Irish League. Nor would they be the only disappointed persons. The crofters of Scotland and the agricultural labourers of England will keep them company. Thirty-two millions of people must go without much-needed legislation because three millions are disloyal, while nearly six hundred members of the Imperial Parliament will be reduced to forced inactivity because some eighty delegates, representing the policy and receiving the pay of the Chicago Convention, are determined to obstruct all business until their demands have been conceded." If any hope still remained of inducing Mr Chamberlain to rejoin the official Liberals by

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offering him terms that he could conscientiously accept, it would have been dissipated by this utterance, which gave them a pretext for saying that he was impracticable.

Though friendly expressions were still used on both sides, and though there really was a temporary abatement of hostilities between the Home Rule and the Unionist Liberals, it was by Mr Gladstone's directions that Sir William Harcourt wrote to Mr Chamberlain and suggested that the Conference should be suspended for a time. The reason assigned was that the *Baptist* article had raised a storm which ought to be allowed to blow over. The facts were that the points of difference revealed were so radical that nothing could be accomplished by further discussion; and that Mr Gladstone, knowing how sincere was Mr Chamberlain's Radicalism, hoped that he would soon be tired of co-operating with Conservatives.

Mr Chamberlain, naturally, accepted Sir William's letter as an informal discharge of the Conference, and told Sir George Trevelyan that he should not go on with it. There was no longer any hesitation about his attitude on Irish questions. He voted against Mr Parnell's hostile Amendment to the Address at the opening of the 1887 Session, and against the Tenants' Relief Bill, and he supported Mr Balfour's demand for "urgency" for the Crimes Bill. Though never converted to Coercion "as a policy," and always regarding it as a "hateful incident," he realised that there could be no order or liberty in Ireland so long as the Plan of Campaign was allowed to continue; and he was particularly disgusted by the covert menaces which Mr Parnell had ventured to throw out. Never, in recent times, has Party spirit in England worked more hotly, more savagely, than about

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Eastertide of 1887. The Nationalists realised that they would be beaten, unless they could intimidate the Government into dropping the repressive Measure which was being hurried forward by the Chief Secretary—which Mr Gladstone, throwing himself heart and soul into the agitation, described as "the worst, the most insulting, the most causeless Coercion Bill ever submitted to Parliament." The sting of it was that it was not limited in duration, and that, being once armed with the powers they demanded, Ministers would not again be put to the trouble and odium of forcing a similar Bill through the House of Commons. On the other hand, the Coercion could be suspended—on the discretion of the Executive—in any district where it seemed no longer necessary; and before Mr Balfour had ceased to be Chief Secretary he was to have the pleasure of announcing that it was dormant throughout Ireland, except in a few neighbourhoods still liable to agrarian disturbance. Granted that the need for exceptional measures had been established, it must be admitted that no more elastic or more effective scheme could have been proposed.

Mr Chamberlain's views are defined with sufficient accuracy in the speeches which he delivered in Birmingham and Edinburgh; the one on 29th January 1887, before the introduction of the Crimes Bill; the other, on 15th April, after it had been passed. To his constituents he remarked, "that certain Radicals lately had been preaching a doctrine which was inconsistent with true Radical principles—*e.g.*, that it was a duty, as well as a right, to disobey a bad law. There were cases, no doubt, in which a man would be justified in offering passive resistance, taking all

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the consequences and making all the sacrifices involved. For instance, if Church rates were reimposed, he would himself refuse to pay them: he would allow his goods to be taken into execution. But he would not barricade his house, would not throw hot water on the police, would not shoot the parson from behind a hedge, would not denounce the ministers of the law who were simply doing their duty, and would not hold them up to vengeance if he came into power. To justify a violent resistance to any law that one disapproves is destructive of all law. No law was ever passed which the law-breakers did not consider bad. Such a theory made every man judge in his own case—free to do what was right in his own eyes. No, a bad law should be amended, but while it was law it must be respected—as being the collective expression of society, the one security of the weak against the strong, the safeguard of the few against the many."

"If (he said) you destroy the law, which is the highest expression of the Democratic idea of Equality, you will have to take your choice between Anarchy on the one hand and Despotism on the other, and to my mind it is a suicidal course for any Radical to lay sacrilegious hands on this great edifice of our freedom. What is the state of things in Ireland? In Ireland the law is violently resisted and openly abused. It is not the law of rent or the law of evictions which is in question. Those are the laws which may be, which I think ought to be, amended, in order that they may be made less stringent and more merciful, but it is the law against assassination, the law against intimidation, the law against theft which is habitually violated. For this violation there is no excuse. I am not prepared, even in this state of

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things, to support what can properly be described as coercive legislation — that is to say, such measures as the establishment of Martial Law or the suspension of *Habeas Corpus*, or any legislation generally restricting the liberty of the subject. But if it be necessary, in order that the law should be respected, to amend and strengthen the ordinary law of the country, I am prepared to give fair and full consideration to any proposal which may be made to that effect. And I will fortify myself by a quotation from an authority that cannot be suspected of any tenderness to coercive measures or of any lack of sympathy with Ireland. 'Murder and outrage,' says this gentleman, 'are not to be allowed in Ireland, any more than they are to be allowed anywhere else. If there is a general attack on property all along the line it must be resisted. The question is how you are to suppress and punish murder and outrage, and how the Government is to deal with an organised attack on property. The answer is, by a vigorous execution of the law as it stands and by a regular and formal alteration of the law if it demands alteration.' That is a quotation from the writings of my friend Mr John Morley — the late Chief Secretary of Ireland—and in the spirit of that quotation I am, as I always have been, prepared to act."

The speech at Edinburgh marked Mr Chamberlain's assent, reluctant though it was, to the proposals of the Government :—

"In Ireland at the present time there are two Governments, two systems of criminal law and procedure, two codes of crime and punishment. You have on the one hand the Government of the Queen, which is the security for law and order and the protection of the lives and property

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of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects. You have on the other hand the government of the League, subsidised and guided by the money of the Convention of Chicago. You have on the one hand a law of the land, under which this country has developed its liberties and secured its great position as the first nation in the world. On the other hand, you have the unwritten law, which has never been publicly discussed, and which is so contrived as to lend itself to the objects of private vengeance and of rebellious faction. Lastly, you have on the one hand the official, the judicial tribunal of the United Kingdom, with its system, which has been built up by generations of intelligent and patriotic men, and which is so contrived as to afford protection in all cases to the innocent; and on the other hand you have a secret tribunal executing their judgments by masked assassins, and meeting out without appeal the punishment of fine and torture and death. You will either have to suppress and put down this illegal combination or this illegal combination will suppress your Government."

In spite of the efforts, described in the next Chapter, which Mr Chamberlain, at the risk of irritating his Conservative allies, made for the relief of Irish tenants' grievances, he was at this time more disliked and reviled by the Nationalists than any other Unionist in Parliament. Nor was he sparing of taunts in reply. Peculiar exasperation was caused by his account, given at Inverness, of a "scene" in the House of Commons, in the course of which Colonel Saunderson accused the Irish members of being friendly with murderers—and, Mr Chamberlain said, accused them truly. The point of that remark lay in the fact that the first "Parnell Letter" (about the Phœnix Park

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murders) had recently been published by *The Times*, and at this time both Parties seem to have lost their heads. Many Unionists, reasonable men in ordinary times, said and believed that most of the Irish members were little better than assassins, and the Parnellites retorted by charging their accusers with forgery and wilful slander. The violence of public feeling on both sides would have made it difficult, if any desire had still existed in Mr Chamberlain's mind, to return to his old associates. The final breach, so he regarded it, was caused by a speech of his old friend, Mr Morley. "How can we, in the midst of the heat of protest against this disastrous and shameful policy of Coercion," Mr Morley asked, "hurry forward to reconcile ourselves with our Dissentient friends, who are in the main responsible for fastening this policy on Ireland? How can we hurry forward to unite with Statesmen who not only support the general policy of Coercion, but doggedly, defiantly, and steadfastly go into the Division Lobby against any modifications of it, and in favour of making the Bill as drastic as they can?"

This, Mr Chamberlain replied, was "the turning-point." The cleavage, he said on 1st June, had become irreparable, and he was driven to the conclusion that on the Gladstonian side there was no longer any desire for reunion. It was in this speech that he used an expression which has been so often thrown in his teeth—as though it showed that his Unionist policy had been influenced by social ambition. But the context shows that the offending phrase, "English gentlemen," was only used by way of antithesis: "We shall be taunted, I suppose, with an alliance with the Tories. At least, our allies will be English

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gentlemen, and not the subsidised agents of a foreign conspiracy. I look beyond mere Party considerations. The Government may be Tory, but, if its measures are Liberal, I am prepared to discuss them on their merits, and without regard to past controversies."

On 14th June a meeting of Radical Unionists was held at Willis's Rooms, in which Mr Chamberlain attempted to define their political position. They did not want, he said, to be absorbed in the Old Toryism, which was a dying creed; they did not intend to surrender to the New Radicalism, which was an English imitation of Nihilism, whose only dogma was opposition to all Government and all Authority. When they had secured their position they would be ready to ally themselves with any persons—whether they called, or had hitherto called, themselves Conservatives or Liberals or Radicals—who accepted the same principles as their own, and were prepared to carry out the same objects by Constitutional objects.

As to Mr Gladstone's latest offer to Lord Hartington, Mr Chamberlain felt some delicacy in alluding to it. He was not himself included in the invitation. Indeed, he was glad to be relieved from all responsibility for further negotiations. But he had perfect confidence in Lord Hartington, "in relation to that matter," both in his consistency and firmness. He was not likely to compromise Unionist principles. If Lord Hartington saw his way to any agreement, the Radical Unionists would have no difficulty in following him. Personally, however, he was no longer sanguine about reconciliation with the Gladstonian Party.

The position now occupied by Mr Chamber-

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lain was both anomalous and uncomfortable. He was at open issue with the Gladstonians, he was out of harmony with the Conservatives, and he was by no means at one with the Hartingtonian Unionists except on the single great question. Nor could he always reconcile himself to the various applications of the Crimes Act demanded by the Irish Executive. It had been decided to proclaim the National League; and Mr Chamberlain, believing there was "no emergency in Ireland," not only abstained from supporting Ministers, when the question was brought up by Mr Gladstone, but, with a few other Unionists, voted with the Opposition. It was in every way desirable, if the opportunity offered itself, that he should withdraw, for a time, from the personal controversies in which he had been so warmly engaged on one side, without having finally attached himself to the other.

It was at this juncture that a tiresome, old-standing dispute between Great Britain and the United States, with regard to the North American Fisheries, suggested to Lord Salisbury that the assistance of a Statesman who was also a man of business would be especially welcome. The Washington Government had agreed to the appointment of a new Commission, and Mr Chamberlain was asked, and agreed, to represent Great Britain. Invested with this modern equivalent for the old *Libera Legatio*, it was hoped that he would be removed, in a complimentary fashion, from the embarrassments of his political situation, and that, when he returned, it would be easier for him to drop into what now was coming to appear his more natural place as one of the Liberal Unionist Leaders, but in definite alliance with the Conservative Ministry.

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Before starting on his important Mission, he naturally paid a visit to his constituents in Birmingham, where he delivered a vigorous speech in defence of the Government policy. This he followed up with a political tour in Ulster.

Though Mr Chamberlain had never declared that the Ulstermen would be justified in taking up arms against a Nationalist Parliament in Dublin —a course which many of the Orangemen declared that they would follow—he had always, even in his Home Rule days, recognised the importance of their claims. He was prepared, it was well known, to remove Ulster from the jurisdiction of the Irish National Council which he had proposed in Mr Gladstone's Cabinet. Now, as a Unionist, he regarded their objections to Home Rule as a fatal argument against it. In the House of Commons in June 1886, it was remembered that he had defended the Protestants of Ulster from the charge of being "unpatriotic and unsympathetic." Why were such epithets applied to them? "Because they are proud to belong to a greater country; because they take their share in the autonomy of the United Kingdom in which they have a part; because they cling to the traditions and the history of the United Kingdom, which is just as much their possession and heritage as it is ours; because they refuse to be cast adrift and cut away from the hopes and associations which they have hitherto cherished. I suppose if my right honourable friend had been a Frenchman he would have denounced the people of Alsace and Lorraine as unsympathetic and unpatriotic, when they refused to be reunited to Germany and when their hearts turned towards the great country from which they were forcibly separated. I suppose if he had been

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an Italian he would have denounced those members of the Savoyard community who did their utmost to prevent the transfer of their country to France; and loyalty must indeed be at a discount when a passionate allegiance to the unity of the kingdom is made a moral offence and crime by a Minister of the Crown. . . . Now, is it a fact that the Ulster Protestants do fear for their material and their religious interests? There is no doubt whatever about it in the mind of any man who reads the papers or attends public meetings or knows anything at all about the state and condition of Protestant Ulster. But was I right to say they had some reason for it? Well, I belong to an extreme section of the Liberal Party, who have, all my political life, joined with those who would destroy every shred of religious ascendancy, by whatever sect it may be claimed. But then I think that gives me, and those who think with me, the right to protest against the substitution of one form of religious ascendancy for another, and I say that the Catholic Church, by its tenets and by its faith, is bound not to be content with equality, but to demand predominance."

The men of Ulster gave, of course, a warm welcome to so thorough-going and effective a champion. As a hard-headed race they were especially pleased with his statistical demonstration (Belfast, 11th October 1887) that Loyalists were not fairly represented in Parliament—only by 17 members against 86 who represented "Sedition." Even in Ulster the Loyalists had only gained 16 out of 33 seats. Yet at the General Election no more than 73,000 votes had been recorded for Parnellites, while 89,000 had been given to Unionists. Under a system which treated Ulster like the other three Provinces, it

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would have 38 members, of whom 21 would be Loyalists and only 17 would be Home Rulers. This argument, pointing as it did to a more equitable distribution of political power in the future, was even more gratifying to the Ulstermen than the general compliments which their visitor paid them. The Irish population, he said, was divided into a majority of 3,000,000 or perhaps 3,500,000, who desired a great experiment, while the minority of 1,500,000 or 2,000,000, who resisted it, comprised all the cultivated intelligence of the country, the greatest part of its enterprise, and a large proportion of its wealth.

Again, at Coleraine, on 13th October, he declared in unequivocal terms against any form of Home Rule. It would only lead to Separation. It was no good for those who supported the former to say that they did not intend the latter. "I do not care a brass button," he said, "what the intentions of these gentlemen are. What I know is what will be the result of their policy; and whether they like it, or whether they mean it or not—as to which we may have grave doubts—I am perfectly certain that the creation of a practically independent Parliament in Dublin would be followed within a few months by the absolute independence of Ireland and the absolute severance of Ireland from Great Britain. That, therefore, is the issue that we have to discuss. We need not consider plans of Home Rule which are accepted as instalments by the Nationalist Party. We have to consider what would be the result, upon your interests and our interests, of absolute separation between the Three Kingdoms. Well, the first reflection which presents itself to our minds is that what Ireland most wants at the present time is capital to develop its resources.

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It wants capital to complete its communications, to enable the industrious farmers of Ireland to bring their produce to market under the most favourable circumstances. In Great Britain you have capital and to spare; millions and millions of money would be constantly seeking investment which frequently find very bad investments in foreign countries—whose interests English capital has done so much to promote. If Ireland were peaceable and settled, if there were a certainty of permanent order and security, this capital would be poured into Ireland, and would immediately lead to a great improvement in all the industries of the country, and especially in the agricultural interest, upon which so many of you depend. But do you believe, do you think, that capitalists, who are the most timid of men, are going to send their money into Ireland, to unbutton their pockets at a time when the persons who claim the future government of Ireland, and declare that it will be in their hands in the course of a few months, are doing everything in their power to show that the law is only made to be broken, and that no contract is sacred? I say, then, that this agitation, and still more any practical result of the agitation, is doing much to destroy the credit of Ireland, and thereby to injure every one of you."

The visit to Ulster had an excellent effect in that Province. It helped to calm the exasperation of the Orange Party against what they considered the callous indifference of ordinary English politicians, and it brought home to people of this country the practical impossibility of establishing an Irish Government to which one-third of the population would be bitterly hostile and openly disobedient. On the other hand, it did not assist Mr Chamberlain's

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mission to Washington. The animosity of the Nationalists was roused to fury by his openly fraternising with their sworn foes; and the word went forth that the American Irishmen were to thwart his Diplomatic undertaking at Washington. Unwisely, perhaps—Mr Chamberlain does, occasionally, let his temper betray him into telling truths that were better unspoken—he referred to this vindictive plot. The publicity thus attracted to the threat compelled the persons thus exposed to make their word good.

It is unnecessary here to go into the history of the North American Fisheries question. In 1887 it was already more than a century old. Although the United States Government had pressed to an extreme the rights which they possessed under various Treaties, and sometimes strained them beyond any rational interpretation of the terms, it cannot be pretended that the Dominion Parliament had proved accommodating. After a careful inquiry into all the facts, and a study of the whole situation, extended over some three months, Mr Chamberlain arranged with the American and Canadian representatives a fairly equitable compromise. Nor was it without difficulty that Mr Chamberlain induced the Dominion Government to make the concessions necessary to give the Americans a motive for coming to an agreement.

The proposals were, briefly, to reckon the Three-mile Limit in bays and creeks, not from headland to headland, but by an imaginary line drawn across the entrance at the first point when the width did not exceed ten miles. American fishermen were allowed to enter Canadian ports and harbours for the purpose of loading, reloading, and obtaining supplies—rights which had

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been very severely restricted in the 1818 Treaty. They were even permitted to buy bait in Canada, but only on condition that the taxes on Canadian fish products were abandoned by the United States. The draft Treaty was signed at Washington, but the Republican majority in the Senate, partly to keep the Irish-American vote, and partly to harass Mr Cleveland's Administration, refused to ratify it.

No practical harm was done by this perversity. Fortunately, the Commission had arranged a *modus vivendi* which averted all friction, and which has remained in force to the present time.

The rejection of the Treaty was, however, represented as a personal rebuff to Mr Chamberlain, and made a subject of exultation by his adversaries. But Lord Salisbury, who appreciated the difficulties with which our Envoy had to contend, was much impressed with the Diplomatic ability he had displayed, and it was, no doubt, on his advice that the Queen offered to reward Mr Chamberlain's services with a high titular distinction — an honour which was gratefully declined. But the personal importance of this prolonged American visit was not limited to the objects for which it had been undertaken. Mr Chamberlain, who had been a widower since 1875, now became engaged to Miss Mary Endicott, daughter of Hon. W. Endicott, Secretary of War in Mr Cleveland's Administration, to whom he was married on 15th November 1888.

With regard to the Special Commission appointed in 1888 to investigate and report on the charges brought by *The Times* against Mr Parnell and the Nationalist Party in general, Mr Chamberlain—though he held that the authenticity

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of the letters attributed to the Irish Leader ought to be strictly investigated—was also of opinion that the inquiry should not be limited to that topic, but should cover the whole ground of the general indictment. Although Sir William Harcourt, and other Gladstonians, went far beyond the mark when they declared that he was the main instigator of the action taken by the majority of the House of Commons, there is no doubt that he sincerely believed in at least the great bulk of the accusations. That the documents relating to Mr Parnell in particular had been published in good faith was sufficiently clear; but it was difficult to understand, if he were a maligned man, why he was so obstinately reluctant to take the ordinary legal measures for his own vindication. Though he was to be exonerated by the dramatic exposure of Richard Pigott, little blame can be attached to Unionists—and many English Home Rulers—who had previously believed that Mr Parnell was the author of the incriminating letters.

The momentary and strictly personal triumph which the Irish Leader achieved before the Commission did not, however, relieve him from his full share of the collective guilt proved against his Party. Nor had Mr Chamberlain any difficulty in showing, when the Report of the three Judges was under discussion in the House of Commons in 1890, that the Nationalists were unable to claim an acquittal. There could be no "picking and choosing" among the findings of the Tribunal; and he dwelt effectively on the intimate connection which had been established between some members of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Physical Force conspirators in America, whose object was to assassinate public men in this country and lay the chief

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cities of Great Britain in ruins. Hitherto such charges had been brought against the Nationalists only by their opponents, and might on that account carry less general authority. The case was now altered when those allegations had been proved before a Judicial Tribunal, and put on record by the Judges.

After an utterance like this, it was clear that there could no longer be any peace or truce between Mr Chamberlain and the Parnellites. They had long regarded him with a personal vindictiveness which they did not extend to other Unionists, nor has he been slow to retort upon them. No phrase, perhaps, has given deeper offence than the one in which he described them as a "Kept Party." But, in spite of the bitter recriminations exchanged in Parliament and on the platform, it is to Mr Chamberlain's credit that, during the hottest period of controversy, he always sought to modify the rigours of imprisonment in the case of adversaries who had brought themselves within the grasp of the Law. It was with his hearty approval that Mr Balfour decided, in 1889, to sanction certain relaxations of gaol discipline in favour of political prisoners as distinguished from ordinary offenders. Those who know Mr Chamberlain best, including those who have quarrelled with him, admit that, however sharply he may use his tongue, he does not hug his resentments. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for him to work in harmony either with Lord Salisbury or Lord Hartington, and, on the testimony of both of these old adversaries, he was a good colleague, both in Opposition and in Office. As for the Irish members, he is, probably, surprised that they bear him any ill-will. He had worked hard and made no slight sacrifices before

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1885 in the Home Rule cause, and even after the split in the Liberal Party he had steadily advocated all Measures calculated to advance the material prosperity of Ireland. Quite recently it came on him as something like a moral shock when he learned that a very prominent member of the Nationalist Party had used language about him in America which would have been criminally punishable in England. He took it very much amiss that one of the Colonial Premiers, distinguished for his Imperialist oratory, shortly afterwards sat down to dinner with the author of that brutal expression. For himself, Mr Chamberlain is conscious towards Ireland of nothing but good intentions and services rendered. As for personal disputes with the Nationalist members of Parliament, he has long ago forgotten them, and wonders that they have not forgiven him.

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CHAPTER X

CONSERVATIVE-RADICAL LEGISLATION, 1886-1892

RIGID and consistent Tories who, as we have seen, resented and even rebelled against some of the Measures proposed by the Second Salisbury Administration, were apt to forget that the Government were not answerable only to the Conservative Party. The General Election of 1886 had, indeed, resulted in a signal defeat of Mr Gladstone, but the position was not without embarrassment for the victors. Lord Salisbury had no choice but to take office without a majority in the House of Commons. Though the Conservatives outnumbered by 40 the combined Gladstonians and Parnellites, the balance might at any moment be turned against Ministers by the vote of the Dissentient Liberals. Some of them, we have seen, attached themselves without reserve to Lord Hartington, some adhered to Mr Chamberlain, while others professed a double allegiance, and attended the conferences held by either of the Leaders. Anomalous as the position of this last group was in some respects, it was these rather fluid politicians who eventually brought about the formation of a solid Liberal Unionist Party, and enabled their Chief to treat on almost equal terms with the Conservative Prime Minister. But for their

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restraining influence, the Radical Unionists might have drifted away from the Whig Unionists. It is true that Mr Chamberlain had made haste to declare that he should regard Lord Hartington as his own Leader. Though no doubt was entertained as to the good faith of this promise, it was only understood to apply to the question of Home Rule, and to mean that he would not personally assent to any compromise on that issue without taking his Unionist colleague into confidence and consultation. But a limited co-operation of this character was by no means the same thing as a fusion of Parliamentary forces.

Not many months had passed since Mr Chamberlain had been engaged in disputes with Lord Hartington as acute as with Lord Salisbury. Practically, the only object as to which they were in hearty accord was that nothing should be done by either that might restore Mr Gladstone to power. Even on this point, though there was no misunderstanding, there was not absolute agreement. Though Lord Hartington had not formally shut the door against negotiations with his late Chief, his attitude on Home Rule was so uncompromising that no arrangement was practicable. But, as has already been shown, it was not until the year 1887 was well advanced that Mr Chamberlain openly renounced his last hope of a compromise and reconciliation. Even after he had thus burnt his boats, it was felt that matters would work more smoothly in Parliament, both for himself and his allies, if he were to withdraw for a time from the scene of almost daily conflict. The vehement animus which he throws into controversy, and the answering passion he excites, did not help the Government

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to pass or administer the exceptional legislation which they considered necessary for Ireland.

Nor amongst the Conservatives themselves was there harmony—or the semblance of it. The extraordinary aptitude which Lord Randolph Churchill displayed as Leader of the House of Commons, and the readiness with which he adapted his experience as a guerrilla to the requirements of official generalship, by no means made up for the disturbing influence he exercised in the councils of the Party. Not until Lord Randolph had retired was Lord Salisbury master in his own Administration, and he had already been compelled to part with Lord Iddesleigh—the representative of that Moderate Conservatism which the Tory Democrats had set themselves to extinguish. If, after several months of hardly concealed strife, the Prime Minister had rid his Cabinet of an intolerable incubus, he had yet to reckon with Lord Randolph's following in the House of Commons. In some respects their ideas of domestic policy were as advanced as those of the Birmingham Radicals. Indeed, Mr Chamberlain had confessed that his hopes of Progressive legislation under a Conservative Government were seriously shaken by Lord Randolph's resignation.

It was on this account, perhaps, that during the early period of the Unionist alliance he was far more difficult to deal with than when a few years' experience of the *modus vivendi* had convinced him that the main body of the Conservatives, sometimes at the sacrifice of their own principles, were resolved to carry out their part of the political bargain. It was, of course, a quite informal understanding, and might be renounced on either side at the shortest notice. What was called the Unionist

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Compact—a definite arrangement, so far as it went—did not relate to general policy. It was simply an agreement that the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists should work together in any Constituency where a vacancy might occur, and that no member of either Party should be accepted as candidate for a seat which had hitherto been represented by a member of the other Party.

It was, therefore, only to be expected while the relations between the Radical Unionists and the Conservative Party were still undefined, and while Mr Chamberlain himself occupied an anomalous position which he had to justify to his own following, that he would be somewhat exacting in his demands on the Government. To tell the truth, he drove a number of rather hard bargains with Lord Salisbury, whose regular supporters hinted, not obscurely, that they were paying too high a price for the Midlands vote. No complaint was made as to the instalment of Merchant Shipping legislation which enabled Mr Chamberlain to carry out a part of the proposals that had miscarried in 1884 when he was President of the Board of Trade. Nor did the stoutest Tory object to the salutary and reasonable provisions of the Mines Regulation Act of 1887, or to the Measure, passed in the same Session, for facilitating the acquisition of Allotments and Cottage Gardens. Indeed, many Conservatives were actively in favour of a scheme that might possibly help in some slight degree to counteract the steadily growing exodus from Village to Town, and which under no conceivable circumstances could do harm either to landlords or farmers. This first, and far the most modest, portion of Mr Chamberlain's formidable agrarian

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programme the Conservatives accepted almost with acclamation, nor did they hesitate to claim as much credit for the Measure as if they had been the authors of it. The Sanitary Authorities were henceforth empowered to acquire land for the purpose of making Allotments and Cottage Gardens, and, when the machinery provided was proved by experience to be more cumbrous and costly than had been expected, an Amending Act was passed (1890), which simplified some of the formalities, and considerably reduced the expense.

There was more diversity of opinion expressed, though no serious opposition was offered, with regard to the Small Holdings Act of 1892—passed, almost undisguisedly, in view of the General Election. Conservatives would have good reason to rejoice in the establishment of a thriving class of yeomen-farmers, but, even in the North of England, where the "statesmen" have lingered on, they are, as a rule, only drawing a meagre subsistence from the soil. The attempt to revive a languishing form of industrial life was not regarded as hopeful by country gentlemen who enjoyed practical acquaintance with the conditions of modern, and more or less scientific, agriculture. The experts openly prophesied failure, and politicians with memories that ran a few years back did not forget that Lord Salisbury had described the proposal as characteristic of "an inveterate Cockney"—a phrase which Mr Chamberlain had very warmly resented. Moreover, there was danger that the value of large farms might be materially diminished if the land most easily accessible from a village were cut off for the benefit of small proprietors. The experiment was not to Lord Salisbury's taste, and, when

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he yielded to the representations of his Radical supporters, it was not with the best of graces, though, naturally, he would have welcomed any proposal which he thought at all likely to lead to the establishment in this country of such an element of Constitutional stability as is provided in Republican France by the existence of a large class of peasant-proprietors. But the crops which lend themselves easily to *la petite culture* are not found profitable in the climate of England, while the demand here for land, in the neighbourhood of towns large enough to offer a fair market, is so strong that, as a rule, the rent can only be paid by a farmer who has some knowledge of scientific agriculture and is able to use expensive machinery.

Conservatives, therefore, had excellent reasons for looking coldly on the political arguments employed in favour of the Small Holdings Bill, though they might have spared themselves the apprehension which they entertained as to its prejudicial effect on large estates. It has done neither harm nor good because, practically, it has been ignored. A different result might perhaps have been recorded but for a long series of more or less unfavourable seasons, and the increasing competition with cheap foreign products. Since the Act came into operation, the farmers in almost every part of England have been struggling for a bare livelihood, while the village labourers and small tradesmen or artisans have felt no temptation to risk their savings in so unpromising a business. Even the Allotment system has not made as much progress as was expected. At one time the villagers were eager enough to take up small parcels of land, and managed to pay good rents, but as soon as they

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Arthur Tarbuck wears dentures

discovered that it was unprofitable to grow corn their interest in Allotments began to wane; and though the movement has not been absolutely a failure, and in some counties even shows signs of possible development, the general results have been confessedly disappointing. Nothing has been accomplished towards checking the increasing exodus from the villages. All the most capable young men, either because they desire to improve their position, or simply because they wish to get more bustle and gaiety out of life, seize the first chance of employment in the towns. The prospect of acquiring Small Holdings tempts them not at all, and on the Allotments and Cottage Gardens it is not common to find able-bodied men at work. The cultivation is left to women, children home from school, and old men past earning regular wages. So far as it helps to keep the veterans off "the parish," the extension of Allotments has been beneficial, but it has done little, if anything, to enlist recruits for rural industry. The attempts which have been made to cheapen and simplify the transference of real property have been so half-hearted, and the demand for such reform on the part of those who would seem to be most interested in obtaining it has been so ineffective against the covert opposition of the conveyancers, that it is impossible to say whether this part of the agrarian policy of the Birmingham Radicals might not, under more favourable conditions, have resulted in general benefit. But the other heads of their scheme, not being supported by any strong opinion on either side of the House of Commons, have been quietly dropped, and, for the present at least, do not seem likely to be revived.

The Bill proposed by the Government in

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1887 for the Relief of Irish Tenants, by permitting them to bring up their rents for revision, though cordially adopted by many of the Moderate Conservatives, had been especially demanded by the Radical Unionists as a set-off against the Coercionist legislation in which they had loyally, though reluctantly, concurred. On the Second Reading Debate the Bill had been accepted by Mr Chamberlain with some effusion. It was, he said, an honest attempt by Ministers to redeem their pledges, it was generous to a degree, and the Government had gone further than any previous Government. At the same time, he pointed out various points on which he desired further concession to the tenants. His attitude on this question is interesting, since it illustrates the ambiguous position which he still occupied. Had he been taken into formal consultation with Ministers before the Bill was drafted, he would not afterwards have been at liberty to suggest Amendments in the House of Commons. That he claimed this right, and that it was not disputed, shows that Lord Salisbury had only assured himself of the general approval of the Radical Unionists.

Nevertheless, the incident led to a small political crisis; and the Prime Minister convoked a special meeting of his Party, at which he dwelt on the necessity of maintaining the existing understanding as to Home Rule. The new proposals of the Radical Unionists were, it should be mentioned, still more strongly urged by the Loyalist tenants in Ulster, and it was decided that a further sacrifice must be made of Conservative principle. What was demanded was that all tenants who were not leaseholders in perpetuity should be included in the Bill, that the Bankruptcy Clauses should be given up, that creditors should be

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restrained from employing *fi-fa* against Tenant Right and agricultural produce, and that Judicial Rents should be rendered liable to revision, the reduction being calculated on the price of local produce, and only operating for three years—until a Purchase Bill should be introduced. From the tactical point of view, it was thought undesirable to bring about a double misunderstanding with the Radical Unionists and the Ulster Conservatives. The proposed Amendments were accepted, incorporated in the Bill, and carried through Parliament.

The subsequent Irish Land Legislation of the 1886-1892 Administration, though acceptable to the Radical Unionists, and framed in accord with their views and principles, was, in its main features, the work of the Chief Secretary, Mr Arthur Balfour. Among the Measures promised in the Queen's Speech of January 1890, was a Land Purchase Bill on an extensive scale. But the better part of the effective period of the Session was spent in discussing the Parnell Report, and, when this controversy was cleared away it was succeeded by another, not so prolonged, but nearly as embittered, on the Licensing Proposals which Mr Goschen had included in his Budget. His plan —approved by Mr Chamberlain and other advocates of Temperance legislation who are opposed to the confiscation of licence-holders' interests—was to provide for the easy and almost voluntary extinction of superfluous public-houses. This was to be done by imposing a special Spirit Duty, which should be set apart for the compensation of dispossessed licence-holders—the Trade buying out the Trade, and those finding the money who gained the advantage. But the scheme, though supported

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by the Church of England Temperance Society, was hotly opposed by the United Kingdom Alliance, and by the bulk of the Liberal Party. It was described as a scheme for the "endowment of publicans," and had to be withdrawn by a Government which had already lost confidence in its hold on the country, and the "whisky money" was allocated to the County Councils for the purposes of Technical Education.

This somewhat ignominious failure of Ministers had to be redeemed, but evidently it would be useless to persist in any ambitious scheme of Irish Land legislation during that Session. Mr Balfour's proposals were deferred to the Autumn, when two Bills were introduced. The less important of these Measures, which established a Land Department and amended the law as to Land Purchase, was advanced through its preliminary stages before Christmas; but in the Summer of 1891 it was decided to incorporate with it the Turbary and Redemption of Rent Bills (which became law on 5th August 1891). The other Bill, which was the substantial Measure of the Session, dealt not only with the promotion of Land Purchase, but also with establishing systematic relief for Congested Districts. In the result the latter portion, as developed, has been more successful than the former. The elaborate and ingenious system of checks and counter-checks, recommended by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in order to guard the Imperial Treasury from the risk of loss, tended, no doubt, to hamper the operation of the Act, while the Nationalist Party, exasperated by the charges, both false and true, which they had recently been compelled to answer before the Parnell Commission did nothing—much

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less than nothing—to promote the success of Unionist Legislation. In fact, though they were, as a body, equally desirous of agrarian and political concessions, they did not wish the Land Question to be settled before Home Rule had been granted. The one agitation kept up steam for the other. But it would be unfair to lay on Irish politicians the whole blame for the slow and partial operation of Mr Balfour's Act. It was, indeed, a disappointment rather than a failure. It was successfully employed wherever the owner was willing to sell his land, and the tenant ready to buy it on reasonable terms. But, like subsequent legislation with the same object, it was found to be practically inoperative where either of the parties was too exacting. It held out no special inducement either to vendor or purchaser. It did not offer that "little bit of sugar" which, as City men know, has an effect quite disproportionate to its intrinsic value in getting people to "do business." Against this comparative inefficiency of the Purchase provisions in Mr Balfour's Act may, however, be set the solid and progressively beneficial results under the Sections relating to the Congested Districts. These, by themselves, would be a sufficient justification of the time spent by Parliament on the whole Measure.

If such credit as was earned by this Act is chiefly due to the Conservative Ministry, the blame for the abortive Bill for establishing Local Government in Ireland must be distributed between the Radical Unionists and Democratic Tories, who had combined to insist on deferring the General Election until this scheme should have been laid before Parliament. Both Mr Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill, in

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the days when they held more or less intimate relations with the Parnellites, had pledged themselves to a qualified form of Home Rule. If they cared to preserve their reputation for consistency, the least they could do was to bring forward some scheme of Local Government. Possibly, if they had been asked, both or either of them, to draft the Ministerial plan, they might have produced a Bill that would not have been received, by Liberals and Nationalists alike, with contumely and derision. But on this point the Ministerialists were by no means inclined to make large concessions to their allies on either side. They believed—and the state of Ireland justified them in believing—that the country was unfit for real administrative liberty. The establishment of local elective bodies would be placing a legal weapon in the hands of tyrannical majorities. In short, the concession of Local Government, if made at all, must be qualified with a series of safeguards and limitations.

The argument was sound enough, but it should have been pressed to its logical conclusion—that the gift should be withheld until it could be offered without reserve. To invite men to manage their own affairs, and at the same time to hold out penalties for misbehaviour, is to exasperate them, not to conciliate. The derision with which the Parnellites received the "Put-'em-in-the-Dock" Clause was, no doubt, overdone. Punishment would have fallen only on bodies that deserved it. But that such a provision should be necessary was a sufficient condemnation of the whole scheme. Though Ministers carried the Second Reading by a substantial majority, they dropped the Bill; they had done enough to satisfy their allies, and to conform to the

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Unionist doctrine that no measure of reform which had been accorded to Great Britain should be withheld from Ireland.

Very different was the fate of two other important articles, taken from the Radical Programme, which Mr Chamberlain successfully pressed on Lord Salisbury's Government—the creation of County Councils throughout England and Wales and the establishment of Free Education. To the former Measure the Conservative Party had long professed an honourable if dilatory affection. They were quickly brought to the point by their Radical friends. Though it might be objected that the administration of county business by the Magistrates and other Local Authorities was generally both efficient and economical, there was no pretence of system and little semblance of Representative control. On these grounds it was decided that county administration must forthwith be assimilated to the principles adopted, about half a century before, for the self-government of the boroughs. The Conservatives were induced to support this scheme because, if they did not undertake it, the Liberals had threatened, when next they came into power, to carry out a root-and-branch reform which, so far as possible, would destroy the influence of country gentlemen in local affairs. By anticipating them, the Conservatives hoped to give the landed interest a chance of preserving, at least, a part of its power, and that, either as elected Councillors or nominated Aldermen, "the Squire and the Parson" would retain some of the importance which they had hitherto enjoyed as Magistrates.

This object, it may here be mentioned, has been attained except in those counties—in

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Wales, more particularly — where the population is predominantly Radical. There the country gentlemen have no authority left except what pertains to their judicial functions. But the Measure framed by Mr Ritchie—a Conservative more Progressive than ordinary Radicals—contained two excrescences. One of these was the creation of purely artificial Counties or County-boroughs, like those of Birmingham and London. This became law. The other miscarried. The institution of District Councils was defeated, because with it Mr Ritchie had linked a plan of Licensing Reform which aroused the animosity of the Temperance Party. The Liberals were willing enough that the control of the Liquor Trade should be taken from the Licensing Justices, but they fought hard against a scheme that would only enable the District Committees of a County Council to close a public house on paying compensation to the tenant. This recognition of a claim, whether legal or moral, on the part of the licence-holders was so vigorously resisted that the Government abandoned their proposal. Their general plan having been thus truncated, they did not think it worth while to persist in the clauses for the establishment of District Councils, to which they had intended to transfer all the confused and overlapping functions of the various Local Authorities except the administration of the Poor Law. This they had always held to be too invidious a duty to be entrusted to an elective body answerable only to a small constituency of neighbours.

If the independent Conservatives had been somewhat lukewarm in dealing with County Government, and decidedly suspicious of the provisions that applied to the Metropolis, they felt no

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dislike for the general object aimed at. As the Measure gradually shaped itself in Parliament, they took to it more kindly and co-operated heartily with their Leaders in making it into a substantial and permanent example of constructive legislation. It was very different with Free Education. This they had denounced in Opposition, and were not more ready to support after they had taken their seats on the Government side of the House. They repudiated Lord Salisbury's attempt to gild the pill by calling it Assisted Education—as though he were only contemplating a somewhat wide extension of the powers already existing for the remission of school fees in necessitous areas. It was true, as Lord Salisbury had pointed out in 1885, that in compelling a man to send his children regularly to school the State had assumed an obligation to render the burden as light as possible. But this was a very different thing, the Conservatives argued, from paying for persons who could well afford to pay for themselves. A satisfactory reply to that objection was not discovered—none, certainly, that carried conviction to the malcontents.

The best reason, perhaps, was, that the task of discriminating between parents who deserved and those who did not deserve relief would be both tedious and invidious, and that, if remission became at all general, the machinery for collecting the remainder of the fees would be unduly expensive in proportion to the receipts. Moreover, having gone so far in the direction of Free Education, it would be as well to proceed the whole distance. By adopting the proposal of Mr Chamberlain, the Government would gratify the Radicals who were on their own side, and deprive those who were opposed to them of a promising cry at the General Election. The demand had been formally put forward by

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the Birmingham Unionists in the early part of 1889, and their position would be very embarrassing if they continued to support a Ministry that refused to meet their views on this question. In a speech delivered at Birmingham in November of that year Lord Salisbury had hinted that the Government were ready to consider the point—on condition that nothing should be done to injure the Voluntary Schools, and thus diminish the opportunities of the working classes for obtaining Religious Teaching for their children. If the Denominational Schools were to be destroyed through Free Education, it would be "not a blessing, but a curse."

That, of course, was not Mr Chamberlain's view. He had always contended, and still believes, that the best arrangement, in an ideal community, would be for the instruction in all State schools to be confined to secular subjects, and that the Religious Teaching should be left to private and voluntary agencies. Nor was this merely an abstract opinion. He had steadily worked for depriving the Denominational schools of any assistance from the Rates or Taxes—although without such a subsidy they could not long be carried on. Nor did he relax this attitude until his informal association with the Conservative Party had hardened into an offensive and defensive alliance—until it was informally understood that he would be ready, when called upon, to take office in a Coalition Ministry. In 1891 we find him saying, at Birmingham, that he should shrink from doing anything to destroy Denominational Education. Under that system provision was made for the teaching of two-thirds of the children in England and Wales, and to get rid of it would involve a capital outlay of

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£50,000,000 sterling* and an increased annual expenditure of £5,000,000. His public recognition of this financial fact was the concession which he made to the Conservatives in return for their adopting Free Education. The scheme in which he co-operated was framed with the intention of compensating the Voluntary Schools for the loss which they would suffer from the abolition of fees. Briefly, it was to give all schools alike a grant of 10s. per annum on the average attendance of children between the ages of five and fourteen—limits which were subsequently extended to three and fifteen respectively. This, it was reckoned, would make good the loss of "school pence," estimated at 3d. a week a head.

Another Clause, however, enabled the Education Department to institute a School Board in any district where the accommodation without fees was reported as insufficient. This provision placed almost indefinite powers in the hands of Whitehall, and, as a matter of fact, it was subsequently worked in such a way as to excite general alarm among the supporters of Denominational Schools. This, however, had not been the purpose of the Act of 1891, which was drafted on what was believed at the time to embody a fair compromise between the views of Lord Salisbury and Mr Chamberlain. When it afterwards became evident that the arrangement had a prejudicial effect on the Voluntary System, Mr Chamberlain made no difficulty about supporting the amendments required by the Church of England and the Roman Catholics. He has interpreted the bargain of 1891 in a liberal spirit, though not without serious risk to his popularity

* This estimate, which was generally accepted at the time, has since been reduced about 50 per cent.

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even amongst his own supporters in Birmingham. This is not the place to describe the furious controversy of last year (1902), but it may be mentioned that his concurrence in the latest Education Act marks no deviation from the line which he laid down eleven years before. He had abandoned the strict Nonconformist ideal of Compulsory Secular Education, not because his faith had weakened in its abstract merits, but because he regarded it as under the circumstances unattainable. He could not insist upon it without breaking his alliance with the Conservatives, and it was more important, he thought, to keep the Home Rule Party out of power than to put an end to the Denominational system.

This was the leading and determining motive of what many Nonconformists call an act of apostasy. The other explanation, on which he has laid almost equal weight, is that no Ministry with which he can co-operate will agree to such a capital outlay and such an increase of yearly expenditure as would be entailed by setting up a complete apparatus of National Secular Instruction. But nothing that Mr Chamberlain has ever said or done, no understanding into which he has entered, could, logically, prevent him from reverting to his original position—if the country should ever be willing to find the necessary millions, and if the Home Rule question were got fairly out of the way. Yet it cannot be denied that on this point he has—practically, if not in principle—dug a wide gulf between himself and his old Nonconformist associates, nor can it be matter of surprise that, opposed to him as most of them were on every point, they should select this as the special object of their attack.

With the majority of Political Dissenters,

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though not with all, the question of "Religious Equality" ranks above any other issue in politics; and it is not the least of Mr Chamberlain's services to the Unionist cause that he has helped to induce a certain appreciable number of them to concede a temporary pre-eminence to the duty of preserving the existing connection between Great Britain and Ireland. It is necessary to dwell on the sacrifice which Mr Chamberlain made on this question, the personal price which he paid, because it has often been said that he had things all his own way with Lord Salisbury between 1886 and 1892. As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister only assented to Free Education on condition that the Denominational Schools should not be placed in a worse position than they held before. Which side got the better of the bargain is for those to decide who are ready to estimate things incommensurate. On the principle that Political Reason lies somewhere between opposite enthusiasms, it would seem probable that neither Statesman deserved either the censure passed on his morals by the extremists of his own Party, or the compliments paid to his sagacity by the out-and-out people on the other side.

On Church questions generally there was no hard-and-fast compact between the Conservatives and Radical Unionists. Mr Chamberlain offered no opposition to the Tithes Bills proposed by Lord Salisbury, and it was with his concurrence that the Act of 1891 was passed. As to Disestablishment, he was not expected, and certainly would not have consented, to modify or suppress his opinions. But, as a matter alike of good feeling and political expediency, it was clearly incumbent on him to abstain from aggressive action

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against those institutions which Conservatives are especially pledged to defend. Nor did this tacit understanding impose any serious restrictions. Between 1886 and 1892 the public mind was nearly always fixed on one or other of the various phases of the Irish question. The struggle over the Crimes Act, the exciting incidents that accompanied the administration of it by Mr Balfour, the publication of the "Parnell Letters," the proceedings of the Commission, the revelations of Major Le Caron, the exposure of Pigott, the partial exculpation of the Irish Leader, followed by his romantic ruin and tragical death, and the unseemly but always amusing quarrels in his Party—these and a number of other piquant Irish episodes made all other matters seem dull and unimportant.

Yet it was a period in which no little history was in the making, both at home and abroad. Besides the matters which have already found mention, warm if passing controversy was excited by such incidents as the involuntary withdrawal of Sir Stafford Northcote from the House of Commons; the disputes and final agreements with Portugal, Germany, and France as to "spheres of influence" in Africa; the misunderstanding with the United States about the Behring Sea Fisheries, and with France about its shore rights in Newfoundland; the abortive Sugar Bounty Convention; the British proposals for the evacuation of Egypt; and the disaster in Manipur. There was much for Unionists to defend or explain, and the Opposition, who had never lost heart, were eagerly pressing every point against the Government. The alliance between the Gladstonians and Parnellites was never so cordial as in 1890 and 1891, and,

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though Ministers were only winding up business for an appeal to the country on their general policy, they seemed unable to find a favourable moment.

It has generally been said that it was on Mr Chamberlain's strong representation that Lord Salisbury gave up the idea of dissolving Parliament in 1891. It would be better, it was argued, to carry a scheme of Local Government for Ireland than to meet the demand for Home Rule with a mere negative. The ignominious collapse of the Measure that Ministers brought forward in 1892 served to increase the discredit in which they had been involved, partly by their own somewhat careless management in the House of Commons, partly through the unsparing resistance which they had to encounter. Whether they would have fared better if they had gone before the electors in 1891, it is impossible to say, but when the writs for a General Election were issued at the end of the following June it was the almost universal opinion that they had been beaten before a single poll was recorded. The only doubt was to the number of Mr Gladstone's majority.

When the returns were finally adjusted it was found that, with the help of the Irish Nationalists (81), the English Gladstonians (274) had a majority of 40 over the Conservatives (268) and the Liberal Unionists (47). The group which had suffered most heavily in the struggle was the Liberal Unionists. Before the General Election of 1886 they had been 90 strong; they came back only 77; and, in the course of the by-elections which had taken place in the six years since, had been reduced to 65. Now they numbered only 47, and, although the politicians who looked chiefly to the Duke of Devonshire (Lord Hartington) had been even less fortunate than

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Mr Chamberlain's followers, the position of the former was less inconvenient because his political opinions on almost every question of the day were so close to Lord Salisbury's that a complete amalgamation would have been comparatively easy, nor would it anywhere have been resented except in a few of the Scottish and Metropolitan constituencies. By maintaining the solidity of the Liberal Unionist Party as he did, the Duke of Devonshire at this time gave more than he got, since he had to bear a part of the resentment inspired among the Conservatives by the Free Education policy forced on them by Mr Chamberlain. But the course followed was as prudent in the long run as it was loyal at the moment. Standing by Mr Chamberlain in the hour of a common adversity, he established the right to partake fully in the rewards of future victory.

It said much for the political prescience of the two Statesmen, and their faith in their cause, that they adhered firmly to their plan —warmly criticised as it was by some of their own supporters as well as by the Conservatives —of keeping up a Party organisation and retaining a Party name distinct from those of their allies. Although, probably, they had no local majority outside certain Midland districts, they could in many places rely on a compact little body of voters sufficient to turn the scale at an election. The Midlands Liberal Unionist Association was founded by Mr Chamberlain in the Summer of 1892 — immediately after Mr Gladstone's success—and was composed almost entirely, he declared, of men who had never belonged to a Conservative Association, and would never agree to "sink themselves in such

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an organisation." They were thus enabled to maintain a distinctive position and to fight Gladstonian Liberalism on its own ground.

The defeat of the Unionist Party, even the comparative failure of his own section, may have been partly compensated to Mr Chamberlain by a personal triumph. His own victory over a Gladstonian candidate (by more than 4000 votes) was almost a matter of course. But he felt the warmest pleasure and pride in the return of Mr Austen Chamberlain for East Worcestershire. It is no secret that Mr Chamberlain is a warm admirer of his son's political ability, and especially of the tact and address with which he grasps that somewhat incalculable element, "the sense of the House." The elder man has even said in private —when the question had been raised of promoting the younger one to Cabinet rank—that if he felt he were standing in his son's way he would be willing to retire from public life. In the Debate which was soon to be held in the Commons on the second Home Rule Bill, it was one of the pleasant features that Mr Gladstone—who never failed in gracious magnanimity —broke off his argument to pay a compliment to the speech delivered by the son of the politician whom he regarded as his most formidable adversary.

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CHAPTER XI

THE HOME RULE ADMINISTRATION

THE majority of 40 with which Mr Gladstone came out of the General Election of 1892 was by no means solid and trustworthy. The split between the seventy-two Anti-Parnellites, who had insisted on the retirement of their Leader from public life, and the nine "Parnellites" who adhered to Mr Redmond, was not purely a personal quarrel. The more numerous group had established an effective alliance with the English Home Rulers, and were prepared to trust Mr Gladstone and to accept any Bill which he might offer them, though on the tacit understanding that if the terms were deemed insufficient they should be treated as only an instalment of the Irish claim—something paid on account. Mr Redmond's little group posed as *intransigents*, and would take, they said, nothing but an immediate settlement in full. It was evident, therefore, even before the meeting of the new Parliament, that on some critical Division they might either withdraw their support from Mr Gladstone or even transfer it to the Unionist Party. But it was equally certain that they would not venture on either course at the very beginning of the Session, or express dissatisfaction until they had seen the Bill which the English

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Home Rulers would propose. They must bide their time.

In deciding to meet Parliament, instead of offering to resign on the result of the General Election, Lord Salisbury followed the more usual though not invariable custom. The Unionists had everything to gain by contesting every inch of fairly tenable ground. The general Debate on the policy of the outgoing Government was in several ways interesting: not least, because Mr Asquith, who had lately been asking certain inconvenient questions about his Leader's scheme of Home Rule, had been put up to move a Vote of Want of Confidence. Incidentally, he taunted the Conservatives with having abandoned the traditions of their Party and entered on a course of "advanced" legislation in order to conciliate "a small and dwindling band of Dissentient Liberals."

This was a taunt that Mr Chamberlain was not likely to overlook. He delivered one of his best fighting speeches. First he dealt with Mr Healy, who had endeavoured, on technical grounds, to exclude him from the discussion, by remarking that whenever it was desired to exhibit personal discourtesy towards any man—or (after a significant pause) any woman—the honourable and learned member always presented himself to accomplish it! This rasping allusion to the controversy about Mr Parnell's private conduct put the Unionists into high good humour, and in an equal degree exasperated the Nationalists. Referring to the reserve which Mr Gladstone had practised with regard to his new Home Rule plan, Mr Chamberlain argued that, now the Opposition Leaders had obtained a majority, they were bound to set out their policy. As it

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was, they proposed to take office without one word of explanation of their domestic programme. As to Foreign Affairs, he trusted that they would be placed in Lord Rosebery's hands, for the country had confidence in him. Otherwise we might wake up some fine morning to find that preparations had been made to evacuate Egypt without consulting the House of Commons. The Democracy were not in favour of "a policy of scuttle."

What sort of agreement, he asked, was there in domestic matters among the supporters of Mr Gladstone? What about the Welsh members, and the Labour members? As for the Independent Labour Party, he would believe in it when he saw it! Even on Home Rule, Mr Labouchere had declared that it ought to be shelved for an indefinite period, while Sir George Trevelyan had once said that he would never consent to it until every Constitutional method had been exhausted! As for Mr Labouchere himself, he had indeed been somewhat sobered by the prospect of approaching responsibility. (This was a peculiarly disagreeable remark, since it was already known by those behind the scenes that the member for Northampton would not be included in Mr Gladstone's Ministry.) But, Mr Chamberlain went on, how reconcile the interests of the Cabinet with those of *Truth?* And how did the Irish Party like the idea of two Cabinet Ministers who would do their best to prevent the Liberal Party from becoming a Home Rule Party?

He produced, as his habit was, a small but well-assorted collection of extracts from the speeches and writings of the chief men on the other side, and showed that the demands made by Mr Redmond were absolutely inconsistent

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with declarations made even by such thorough-going Home Rulers as Sir William Harcourt, Mr John Morley, and Mr Gladstone himself. If the new Government kept faith with England they must quarrel with the Nationalists. Under such circumstances how could a Ministry retain any stable existence. How long was all British Legislation to be "made ducks and drakes of" by the Irish Party? Finally, he urged the wisest and most sensible members of the Opposition to reconsider their position — they would find it impossible to carry out the policy to which they were pledged.

This appeal to the moderation of the Gladstonians may have been made in good faith, but, even if any of them had come to Westminster with open minds, words like these were not likely to exercise a calming influence on the House—the speaker had jeered in turn at every group of the composite majority, and irritated such moderate men as may have been sitting on the Opposition benches. Nothing is less calculated to turn the vote of a hesitating politician than a public warning that he is being duped by his Leaders. It is the way of Members of Parliament to think well of themselves, and the least influential items like to fancy that they are pulling the Party strings. To tell the truth, Mr Chamberlain does not possess the power of conciliating those whom he despises—he does not suffer fools gladly. He treats them as if they had no more importance than they really possess, and lacks the grave urbanity with which Mr Gladstone would, if necessary, listen to advice and remonstrances to which he had no intention of paying any practical attention. But if Mr Chamberlain's speech on this occasion failed in its

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ostensible object, it accomplished what was quite as useful to the Unionists—it put them into good heart, and, though the Division showed that every member on both sides had "voted straight," the defeat in the Lobby was compensated by the honours of Debate.

The transference of power which was accomplished in the course of a few days by the resignation of Lord Salisbury (15th August) and the acceptance of office by Mr Gladstone, left Mr Chamberlain and the Radical Unionists in a position of comparative irresponsibility. Though they had arrived at a fairly complete understanding with the Conservatives, as to the course which they would follow when the Gladstonians should be ejected from office, they were free, for the present, to play for their own hand. Mr Chamberlain had, perhaps, somewhat anticipated this enfranchisement by his adumbration of a scheme for Old Age Pensions (which will be dealt with subsequently), and by the promulgation of other less sweeping proposals. His new programme was conveniently summed up in an Article which he published in *The Nineteenth Century* (November 1892). The chief items were, (1) statutory control of the hours of work in mining and other especially dangerous or laborious callings; (2) local regulation of the hours of employment in shops; (3) the establishment of arbitration tribunals for trade disputes; (4) compensation to workmen or their legal representatives for injury or death not caused by the fault of the sufferer; (5) old-age pensions for deserving poor persons; (6) control over the immigration of foreign paupers; (7) increasing the power of Local Authorities to carry out improvements and provide for the better housing of the poor; and (8) enabling them to advance

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money to working men who desired to purchase their dwelling-houses.

The writer was not unaware that certain members of the Conservative Party would look askant upon some of his proposals. They did not conceal their dislike of the Progressive policy adopted by their Leaders, and declared that Lord Salisbury and Mr Balfour had already made too great concessions to Liberal Unionist pressure. This, he said, was a complaint that should be considered in connection with the common accusation that the Liberal Unionists had become more reactionary than the most extreme of the Tories. But he did not feel much misgiving as to the attitude of the bulk of the Party. Once again he pointed out, what he had admitted in his Pre-Unionist days, that "in social questions the Conservatives have always been more progressive than the Liberals, and in their latest legislation have only returned to the old Tory traditions." Almost all the reforms relating to Labour questions had been initiated by Tory Statesmen, and most of them had been passed by Tory Governments. The Factory and Workshop Acts, the Mines Regulation Act, Merchant Shipping Legislation, the Acts relating to Sanitation, Artisan's Dwellings, Land Purchase, Allotments, Small Holdings, and Free Education, were all Conservative, and it was therefore historically inaccurate to represent the Tory Party as opposed to social legislation. He did not add—it would have been indecorous and impolitic to mention—that a good portion of the list of Measures which he had quoted had been pressed by himself and his allies on the not altogether gracious acceptance of the Conservative Party.

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The compliment was adroit, and proved useful to Conservative candidates at by-elections; but it was not quite to the taste of hard-shell Tories to be told, with an air of patronage, that they had been practising Socialism without knowing it! The name was alarming, although the doctrines attributed to them were not Socialism at all, but only that State Socialism which in practical Germany had been adopted by so Conservative a Statesman as Bismarck—adopted with the very purpose of strengthening the existing order of things. From the real and more dangerous Socialism, so far as he had ever favoured it, Mr Chamberlain had now cut himself adrift. He expressly disclaimed sympathy with those International developments which aimed at a general disorganisation of the industrial system and preached a political crusade of Labour against Capital. The condition of the working classes, he believed, was better than it had been half a century before, and it was steadily being improved. He had no patience with "self-constituted representatives of Labour," who asserted that working men were "still in a state of misery and servitude." It was not true that discontent was seething in their breasts, that a "stupendous awakening was to come"; that all past efforts for their intellectual emancipation and material welfare had been "mere tinkering and empiricism." It was absurd to suppose that "the New Unionism —or the New Collectivism—or some brand-new device of Continental philosophers, or of hitherto unappreciated geniuses of home manufacture"—would elevate them to "heights of co-operative prosperity and collective enjoyment of which, in their dull acceptance of the existing order, they had not yet dreamed."

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Mr Chamberlain was especially distrustful of the New Unionism which, for the time, seemed to have fascinated the imagination of the working classes, and whose exponents had captured many of the old-fashioned Trade organisations. It seemed to him to go beyond what was reasonably attainable when it advocated large schemes of social reconstruction which it proposed to carry by national and even by international action. It welcomed the assistance of Continental associations, some of which were reasonably suspected of leanings towards Anarchism. The central idea of the New Unionism—that the interests of Labour were opposed to those of Capital—was inconsistent with that school of Political Economy to which Mr Chamberlain had, hitherto, more or less adhered. He had consistently asserted, and in the most uncompromising terms, that Labour was entitled to a larger share in profits than it had ever yet received, but he looked on Master and Man as partners, not as antagonists. He especially disliked the intolerance displayed by the New Unionism towards those who remained outside it—an intolerance which sometimes took the form of actual oppression. Nor was it certain some of the demands made in the name of Labour would be endorsed by the general opinion of the working classes. There was nothing to show that the majority in the different trades would vote for limiting the hours of work to eight in the day, though he was willing to see the experiment tried in the case of the mining industry.

The new Parliament having been prorogued almost as soon as the change of Ministry had been effected, no definite announcement of Mr Gladstone's policy could be expected before the

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opening of the 1893 Session (which was fixed for 31st January) and the only important Administrative act of the Government was the nomination of a small Commission, with Mr Justice Mathew as Chairman, to report what steps should be taken for reinstating the Evicted Tenants in their holdings. Nevertheless, it had become known that, in order to satisfy as many as possible of the combined groups who composed the majority, mention would be made in the Queen's Speech of all the leading articles in the Newcastle Programme.

A week before the meeting of Parliament, Mr Chamberlain felt himself justified in criticising the position of Ministers. Referring to their exercise of patronage, he remarked that they were "stuffing" the provincial benches and crowding the Local Boards in Ireland with their own "partisan nominees." It did not look, he said, as if they expected to stay where they were! As for the Home Rule Bill, no one had been consulted except the Anti-Parnellites—the motto of the Government was "Only Irish need apply." After six months' tenure of power, a Ministry which had promised an all-round Revolution could only point to having allowed public meetings in Trafalgar Square, and appointed a few women to inspect workshops. It was almost pathetic! In Egypt the Government had very wisely thrown over the policy which Mr Gladstone and Mr Morley had led Europe to expect, but in Uganda they appeared once more to be following the fatal policy of "drifting." Mr Gladstone, it was known, had determined to retain the Irish members at Westminster, and this, it was suggested, should prevent Mr Chamberlain from con-

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demning the principle of the forthcoming Home Rule Bill, since this was what he had himself urged in 1886 and 1887. That view he could not accept. Compromises which had seemed feasible then would now be sheer madness. There was no sign that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament would be "seriously and practically maintained." No, the Unionists could make no terms with the Gladstonians. They would meet Parliament determined to resist a policy which began by betraying the interests of the Loyalists in Ireland, and would end in betraying the interests of Great Britain.

The speech was important not only because it separated Mr Chamberlain by an impassable gulf from any probable scheme of Home Rule, but also because it contained, though not the first, yet the most emphatic assertion of that Imperialism of which Mr Chamberlain has since been recognised as the chief exponent. Until the proposal to dismember the United Kingdom had been raised in an acute form, his Imperial sentiment, though never quite dormant even in the unfortunate period between 1880 and 1885, had been kept subordinate to what he considered the far more urgent need for domestic reform. The relative importance of the internal and external affairs of the country had been inverted by the imminent danger of a Government being established on our flank which certainly would not be friendly, and might become actively hostile—on which we could not rely, even for neutrality, if we were engaged in war with any foreign Power. It was this consideration—more strongly, perhaps, than the rights of the Ulstermen—which had turned Mr Chamberlain's thoughts in the direction of National Defence, and for the time to shut

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out every other object for which he had been working.

The one duty of an English Statesman, he now felt, was to protect this country from foreign aggression, and it was an essential part of this policy to keep Ireland beyond the reach of Continental intrigue. The mere alarm, the possibly unfounded apprehension, of such a risk, would be sufficient to paralyse industrial progress by constantly recurrent panic. Everything else must be sacrificed for the sake of maintaining the sense of national security. From this opinion, which henceforth became his dominating sentiment, it was an easy and almost inevitable transition to that Imperial patriotism which he has since set himself to organise and develop. Without our Foreign and Colonial trade, and all that it involves, the British Isles must rapidly sink to the level of a second-rate Power. We should be unable to support our population except on a bare subsistence, and we should have no outlet for the energies of those who required a wider career. We should have to settle down tamely to cultivate our petty cabbage-garden—and the soil would be worse than Candide's. The idea that our commerce and manufactures should be allowed to dwindle was unthinkable to one who had pushed his way to the front in the bustling, competitive world of Birmingham, and who embodied in his own nature not a little of the self-confidence and aggressive energy that distinguish his fellow-citizens. They are unalterably convinced that England is the greatest country in the world, and that Birmingham is the centre and source of its political vigour.

The Queen's Speech verified alike the

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hopes and fears expressed a week before by Mr Chamberlain. The determined action taken by Lord Cromer in Egypt, supported by the resolute attitude of Lord Rosebery at home, had demolished any expectation that we should withdraw from the Nile Valley, and the Government announced that our garrison there would be strengthened, though they formally renewed the old futile assurances that the Occupation was but temporary. In Uganda, however, the "policy of drifting" was barely concealed by the appointment of a Commissioner to draw up a Report on the state of affairs in that region. The state of Ireland was declared to be satisfactory, and the Home Rule Bill was described as intended to afford contentment to the Irish people, relief to Parliament, and additional securities for the strength and union of the Empire. Other subjects proposed for legislation were the Registration Law, the Duration of Parliaments, One-man One-vote, Employers' Liability, Hours of Labour for Railway Servants, the Conspiracy Law in Trade Disputes, Enlargement of the Powers of the London County Council, and the Suspension of Appointments in the Welsh and Scottish Churches. Even this list does not exhaust the "measures of public utility" which the Government had adopted from the Newcastle Programme.

To set down such an agenda paper for Parliament was to invite that sort of organised opposition which the Government of the day always regard as wilful Obstruction. If Mr Gladstone had sought to conciliate every group of his supporters by giving to each a promise of taking up its own pet reform, he had also irritated every section of a vigorous and powerful minority.

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To tell the truth, however, the resistance would have been equally prolonged if no other Measure had been brought before Parliament than the Home Rule Bill which Mr Gladstone intended, at all costs, to force through the House of Commons. A scheme so intricate and comprehensive contained so many proposals which offered ground for fair discussion that no ordinary Session would have sufficed to dispose of it. Nor can it be denied that the Leaders of the Opposition insisted to the utmost on their rights, and, especially in Committee, took no pains to prevent their followers from adopting dilatory tactics. There was, indeed, some basis for the charge of Obstruction — enough, at least, to justify Ministers in the summary course to which they were eventually compelled to resort. It was their main object to get the Bill through the Commons and throw on the Lords the odium of rejecting it. They would thus establish their good faith towards their Irish allies, and provide themselves, when necessary, with a popular cry for the next General Election. The policy which was most in favour with the Party Managers was to follow up the Home Rule Bill with other Measures—such as Welsh Disestablishment and One-man One-vote—which the Peers would be equally certain to reject, and thus force them, according to an old phrase used by Mr Chamberlain, to "fill up the cup" of their iniquities.

This being accomplished, the Gladstonians could go to the country on a series of questions on which the two Houses had been in conflict, and ask for a general declaration in favour of the Popular as against the Hereditary Chamber. It was not a course to which Mr Gladstone was personally inclined—he had always avoided raising

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that issue in its most direct form—but he made no objection to his followers holding it out as a menace to the Opposition. The combined Unionist Party were, of course, bent on thwarting it—the Conservatives and Moderate Liberals, because they disliked the imputation of relying solely on the Peers; the Radicals because they might find it somewhat inconvenient to be engaged in the active defence of those hereditary privileges which a few years before they had so vigorously impugned. Moreover, with so small a majority as Mr Gladstone had at command, there was always the possibility, especially as the Redmondite vote was notoriously uncertain, that the Government might one evening be caught at a disadvantage and beaten in the Lobby. It was known that a certain number of the Gladstonians were but lukewarm in their support of Home Rule, and it was hoped that a few of them, enough to turn the scale, might find an excuse for failing the Government on some important Division, and thus quietly getting rid of the Measure,—certainly for that Session, and perhaps for the rest of a Parliament which, in any case, could not be long-lived. No such accident was allowed to happen. Mr Gladstone was too consummate a tactician, he was too well served by his lieutenants, and his Party were too vigilantly kept up to the mark by their Irish associates. But if the Unionists could not destroy the Bill, at least they might delay it; and it would be something to the good if they could exhaust their antagonists by a prolonged struggle. This is the explanation of tactics which did not altogether conform to a correct Parliamentary standard. But though they set a bad precedent—which was certain to be followed, and bettered, by their adversaries on

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the next convenient occasion—their action was, at least, extenuated by the grave importance of the issue at stake. If the Unionists did unduly strain the forms of Parliamentary procedure they were fighting, they thought, in defence of the unity of Parliament itself.

Whatever complaint was to be made subsequently as to the conduct of the Unionist minority in Committee, the Debates on the First and Second Reading Debates were admirably conducted on both sides of the House, and at the time were highly interesting. The outline which Mr Gladstone presented (13th February 1893) of his revised scheme was, briefly:—

(1) The establishment of an Irish Legislature, consisting of a Council and an Assembly, with power to make laws on exclusively Irish affairs.
(2) The supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament was not to be impaired or restricted.
(3) Certain subjects were reserved from the Irish Legislature—especially matters relating to the Crown. Peace and War, Dignities and Titles, the law relating to Treason and to Aliens, and everything relating to external trade.
(4) The Irish Legislature was prohibited from interfering with religious or personal freedom.
(5) The Viceroy would be nominated by the Crown for six years, and the office would be subject to no religious disabilities.
(6) He would have a Cabinet—an Executive Committee of the Irish Privy Council.
(7) He would veto Bills on the advice of that Cabinet, and subject to the instructions of the Crown.
(8) The Council would consist of 48 members elected by persons rated above £20 a year, and members would sit for eight years.
(9) The Assembly would contain 103 members returned by the existing Constituencies for five years.
(10) The validity of an Irish Act might be questioned by the Viceroy or the Secretary of State, and would be determined by the Privy Council.

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(11) The Royal Irish Constabulary was to be gradually reduced, and eventually superseded by a local police.

(12) Irish members would be retained at Westminster, but would be forbidden to vote on any question relating solely to Great Britain or any taxation not levied in Ireland.

(13) A financial settlement was proposed, by which nearly £2,500,000 was claimed for Ireland's contribution to Imperial purposes, while on the credit side there were rather more than £5,500,000. When the expenditure on Civil Government had been deducted from the latter amount, the Irish Exchequer would start with a balance of about £500,000.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate the main points in the discussion that followed Mr Gladstone's remarkable exposition of this famous Bill, except so far as to indicate Mr Chamberlain's position. He reasserted his belief in the Prime Minister's cardinal principle, that the widest measure of Local Government should be given to Ireland that would be consistent with the unity of the Empire, the supremacy of Parliament, and the protection of minorities. He objected to this Bill because it did not satisfy those conditions. If Ireland had a separate Parliament, there would be no Imperial supremacy —she would be a standing danger to the Empire —her political condition was controlled by her geographical situation. But Mr Gladstone's scheme, though it went too far, would not satisfy the Irish people. They were prohibited from dealing with Religion or Education, and from controlling their own trade. This was sowing the seed of future discontent, which would assert itself in the "time of England's emergency and Ireland's opportunity." Even if the present Nationalist Leaders expressed contentment, they

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could not bind their successors. If we were engaged in war with a great Power, and if the Irish Parliament refused its contribution to Imperial taxation, how could the money be collected? The police, the civil servants, the judiciary, would be in the hands of the Irish Assembly. How prevent the drilling and arming of a people peculiarly apt in military affairs? The lives of landowners, "land-grabbers," and bailiffs would not be worth a moment's purchase. What could the Imperial Parliament do when the whole Executive was in the hands of the Irish Legislature? Suppose it had been resolved in Dublin to endow the Roman Catholic Church? If the Veto of the Crown were to be exercised, the Irish Ministry would resign *en bloc*, and there would be none to take its place. The plan for the partial retention of the Irish members at Westminster would not work. They would be kept dangling about the Lobby, and never know when they would be required in the House. The only feasible form of Home Rule was either the establishment of "an enlarged London County Council" or the institution of four separate Parliaments for England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, with one Imperial Parliament supreme over all. Moreover, the Bill gave no protection to minorities, none to Ulster. If Ulster made up her mind to fight, no Liberal Government would be strong enough to coerce her into subjection. Finally, it was idle to say that if the new Constitution were found to work badly it might be withdrawn. That could not be done without provoking Ireland to the verge of insurrection. It was an irrevocable step which Parliament was asked to take, but never in the history of the world had a risk so tremendous been encountered with so

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light-hearted an indifference to its possible results.

In the Second Reading Debate, which was not commenced (6th April) until after the brief Easter Recess, Mr Chamberlain dwelt chiefly on those points over which he had passed somewhat lightly in the previous discussion. Mr Gladstone, he said, had enlarged on the evil effects of the old misrule of Ireland by England. But in 1869, in 1870, and again in 1881, he had expressed faith in the great reforms which he proposed and carried out. The country was told that they would have a conciliatory effect—on each occasion there was a promise of "a union of hearts." Had these reforms, then, been failures? Had these predictions been falsified? That, certainly, was not Mr Gladstone's view! Then, if conciliation had produced great results, why not give it a longer trial? Indeed, it was true that a marvellous improvement had taken place in the state of Ireland—and even in its relations with England—during the last twenty, thirty, and fifty years.

In spite of the faults in Mr Gladstone's Bill, Mr Chamberlain suggested that the English people—so sick were they of the Irish question—might accept the settlement proposed if they believed it would be final. But how could it be final when it was rejected by one-third of the nation, by the vast majority of the propertied and educated classes? As for the professions of the Nationalist Leaders, Mr Chamberlain reminded the House that Mr Parnell had declared in public that he regarded the first Home Rule Bill as "closing the great controversy." A few days afterwards he told his colleagues that he only accepted it *pro tanto*, and it was nothing but a "Parliamentary Bill." Nor, in fact, did this

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second Bill contain the elements of finality. Would the Nationalists avow that they accepted the proposed Veto of the Crown, exercised on the advice of a British Minister, in the same sense as the English and Scotch supporters of the Government accepted it? After pointing out the various limitations on Self-Government contained in the Bill, limitations in which an Irish Legislature was most unlikely to acquiesce, Mr Chamberlain passed on to examine the financial provisions, which, he said, were too liberal. Generosity to Ireland as long as she remained a part of the United Kingdom was proper enough, but no exceptional consideration would be due to an independent nation. Most of her taxation going back to her for local purposes, she only contributed about one twenty-fifth part of the Imperial expenditure, whereas she ought to pay one-twelfth—yet already the Irish members were calculating that she should not pay more than one thirty-fifth. As for War expenditure, a Nationalist organ had just declared that Ireland ought to contribute nothing, as she could have no interest in any War waged by Great Britain. A pretty look-out for the Union of Hearts!

The safeguards suggested in the Bill were worthless—they could only be enforced by Civil War. Without the good-will of the Irish people, they were not worth the paper they were written on! Referring to an Article which he had recently published in the *Nineteenth Century*, Mr Chamberlain said that Mr Gladstone's criticism was a monstrous travesty of his opinions. His censure on Irish methods had applied not to the whole people out of Ulster, but to the Leaders of the Nationalist Party—who threw away all principle, abused all power, and had no sympathy

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with England, or sense of justice. He did not attribute to the Irish people any "double dose of original sin." It was Mr Gladstone who gifted them with a double dose of "very original virtue." Mr Chamberlain admired Mr Gladstone's "almost boundless faith." Parliament was invited to trust to their good intentions for the defence of the lives and property of the Loyalists; to their gratitude, for assistance in the hour of necessity. Mr Chamberlain did not believe in the miracles promised by Mr Gladstone, which could change the hearts of men and alter the springs of human action. "The possible danger," he said, "is too great, and the possible gain is too small. If this Bill were passed, and we were to escape—by a good fortune which would be as unexampled as it would be undeserved—from disaster and disgrace which we had rashly provoked, still you have not been able to give us even a plausible expectation of any advantage corresponding to the risks which you wish us to incur."

The Second Reading having been carried on 21st April by 43 votes (347 against 304), on 8th May the Committee stage was commenced. Mr Chamberlain opened for the Opposition by moving that the first Eight Clauses should be postponed until the Ninth—on which the question of Imperial supremacy turned—had been settled. This, after all, was the fundamental provision in the Bill. The suggestion was not unreasonable, and, had it been accepted, the subsequent course of the discussion might, conceivably, have been accelerated. Naturally, however, Mr Gladstone objected to having his Bill turned inside out at the bidding of the Opposition. Besides, he had tactical reasons for not showing his hand on this question until the last possible

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moment. The hot Debate which followed was but the first of many almost disorderly discussions, and on 28th June the Fifth Clause was still unfinished. On that evening Mr Gladstone stated, with his usual Parliamentary euphemism, that "avoidable delays" had occurred in the taking of Divisions, and that next day he would move a Resolution which would expedite the course of business. This was for the "Closure by Compartment," or procedure by "Guillotine," which has since been invoked by a Unionist Government, and which, for good or evil, seems to have become an established part of our Parliamentary system.

Curiously enough, it was adopted at the instigation of that Nationalist Party which had invented and perfected the art of Obstruction, and which now devised the one absolutely effective remedy for the mischief which it had introduced into the House of Commons. At the time it was denounced as a tyrannical innovation—far more drastic, as Mr Balfour pointed out, than Mr Gladstone's action in 1881, when he closured everybody who differed with him, and suspended the Irish members so as to pass the Clauses of his Crimes Act during their absence. That was a case of urgent necessity: there was no urgency for the Home Rule Bill. In order to shorten the discussion, the word had been passed to the Gladstonians not to make speeches that would justify replies. But Mr Chamberlain was not going to lose his opportunity. Never has he been more incisive and irritating than when he got up to "compassionate" Mr Gladstone on the position in which he was placed. Nobody believed that he was willingly doing his present work!

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"There sit the men," he exclaimed, as he pointed to the Irish members, "who pull the strings of the Prime Minister of England. Under the threats of his Irish masters, under the pressure of his least experienced supporters, he comes down here to move a Resolution which is contrary to all the principles of his public life." It was one more surrender to revolt. The Government were taking advantage of their brief tenure of office, of their casual majority, to betray the interests of the country, sacrificing them to men who have been convicted of conspiracy against those interests. The defects of the Bill had been concealed from the country, and the concealment was almost fraudulent. The Government dared not submit the details to the people. Their tactics were not the tactics of Statesmen, but the tactics of Tammany Hall. Nevertheless, he was glad they had played their last card. The British Empire was being sold by private treaty, and it was natural that the Irish Party, on completing this underhand bargain, should say, "Why debate any more? We are satisfied—*pro tanto!*"

In spite of Unionist denunciation, and some misgivings among the English Home Rulers, the Closure by Compartment was carried by a majority (32) only slightly below the normal strength of the Government. The result was to hasten the end, but not to soften the asperities, of Debate. A characteristic "scene" arose when Mr Dillon attempted to justify his threats of revenge on the Irish minority by saying that his words had been spoken under a sense of indignation at the "Mitchelstown Massacre." Mr Chamberlain—always ready with his dates and "cuttings"—blandly pointed out that Mr Dillon's speech had been delivered about nine

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months before the incident said to have provoked it!

On 12th July Mr Gladstone confessed, what had long been felt, that the "in-and-out" arrangement proposed for Irish members at Westminster was not one that could be carried. The only practicable alternative was to leave them the right to vote on all questions, though it was a method not without "its inconveniences." This concession to the Irish Party was resented by many of the English Home Rulers; and, of course, it was attacked by the Conservatives. It was a change of front, Mr Balfour said, made on no better ground than that the Whips said it would pay in the Division Lobby. A Government which had no convictions, or, at any rate, did not act upon its convictions—which rather prided itself on indicating that its convictions were opposed to its policy—was not worth attacking! Mr Gladstone retorted that Ministers did not care whether Mr Balfour attacked them or not. The position of the Irish members at Westminster was not vital to the Home Rule Question, and therefore it was a matter on which the Government thought that the "judgment of the country" should prevail. This gave Mr Chamberlain one of those chances which he never misses. Did the Government want to know "the judgment of the country"? Let them consult it. He challenged them to dissolve Parliament on that issue. This was a question on which the Prime Minister said the British people were to have a determining voice! Here Mr Gladstone remarked that Great Britain already had such a voice, since it possessed a majority of the House. Mr Chamberlain retorted that in the vital Division on the Bill the vote of Great Britain—as distinct

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from that of Ireland—had been cast against Ministers. He did not conclude without remarking that the real question was whether the interests of Great Britain were to be controlled by "delegates from Ireland nominated by Priests, elected by Illiterates, and subsidised by enemies of the country!"

This was by no means the warmest encounter between Mr Gladstone and Mr Chamberlain. It happened, on the day appointed for the final Act of Closure, that Mr Chamberlain had moved an Amendment which led Mr Gladstone to charge him with playing the part of Devil's Advocate. The vague, inoffensive phrase delighted the more ignorant members of the House,—who believed that something very terrible had been uttered,—and Mr Gladstone, warmed with applause, deviated from his usual courtesy to accuse Mr Chamberlain of constantly and deliberately attributing to men who had a right to stand on a level with him, and who had been at one time his colleagues, and believed themselves to be his friends, motives which were directly contrary to their professions, and which they indignantly disclaimed.

Mr Chamberlain described this as a "ferocious speech," and it must be remembered that Mr Gladstone's impressive manner lent a force to the spoken rebuke which does not appear in the printed words. It led to a memorable retort, and a disgraceful scene. Mr Chamberlain taunted the majority with regarding the Bill as perfect and unimprovable. Even when a change was made, they applauded the alteration. After referring to the numerous and important modifications which had been introduced in Committee, he said that the Bill had been changed in its most vital features, yet it had always been found perfect by honourable mem-

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bers behind the Treasury Bench. "The Prime Minister calls 'Black,' and they say 'It is good': the Prime Minister calls 'White,' and they say 'It is better.' It is always the voice of a God! Never since the time of Herod has there been such slavish adulation!" As the name of Herod was pronounced, the Irish broke out with cries of "Judas." At ordinary times the Chairman would have intervened with a formal rebuke, somebody would have apologised, and the incident would have been over. But Mr Chamberlain's taunt was uttered, and the reply given, almost at the moment when the final Closure was to operate. The Irish were exultant, the younger Tories exasperated, and on both sides, perhaps, some were not rigidly sober. The pent-up feelings and the undigested liquor asserted themselves together, and a trifling altercation between two members led to a free-fight on the floor of the House between Conservatives and Nationalists, the confusion being much increased by certain amiable gentlemen who mingled in the fray with the purpose of drawing off the fighting contingents. If the riot was disgraceful, the conclusion was ridiculous. The Speaker was sent for, and on his appearance the members slunk back to their seats like so many schoolboys caught playing in their lesson hour.

It is unnecessary to follow the subsequent course of the Home Rule Bill, though Mr Chamberlain opposed it at every stage, as actively as if it had some chance of escaping a summary extinction in the House of Lords. Though his elaborate arguments and pungent phrases did nothing to delay its formal progress, they caused him to be recognised, more fully even than Lord Salisbury and Mr Balfour, as the Champion of Unionism, and first won him

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his place in the affections of the rank-and-file of the Conservative Party.

The sentiment was to be strained hereafter,—and severely strained,—but it never ceased to operate. Even when sharp misunderstandings arose, the thought of a rupture was not entertained. Now and again, it is true, he taxed the patience of his allies somewhat heavily — *e.g.*, when he gave his support, though not in any active manner, to Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. In 1895, again, there was a brisk dispute over the vacancy at Leamington, created by the retirement of Speaker Peel from the House of Commons. The right of contesting the succession was promptly claimed by the Liberal Unionists, on the ground that Mr Peel had belonged to their Party. But it was shown that he had never severed—indeed, he had maintained by subscriptions—his connection with the local Gladstonian organisation, and the Conservatives, who had a local candidate in the field, and possessed nearly all the voting weight in the Constituency, argued that they were entitled to treat it as an open seat.

Equitably, their position was unassailable. The Liberal Unionist contention as to the politics of the late Speaker was by no means established, and under these circumstances, especially as the Conservative representative had been at work for some time and was generally acceptable to the electors, it was felt that the appeal to the Unionist Compact was to interpret the letter rather than the spirit of that arrangement. So much soreness was caused that a compromise had to be arranged. The Conservatives consented to give up the seat to the Liberal Unionists, but only on condition that the candidate put forward

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by their allies should be withdrawn in favour of one whose views were but nominally distinguished from their own. It would have been the height of folly if either of these grounds of controversy had been allowed to break up the union between the Conservative and Radical Unionists. It would have been impossible for Mr Chamberlain to abandon, or even to sink, his opinions with regard to Disestablishment, and, if he had been unconciliatory in regard to Leamington, it must be remembered that the Constituency lay almost within that Midland region which was the stronghold of his political power, and also that the Liberal Unionists, having suffered so heavily at the General Election, could not well afford to have their list of members diminished.

So far as Mr Chamberlain found himself compelled to advocate, or not to oppose, measures introduced by the Gladstonians, it was admitted by the Conservatives that he did what he believed to be his duty in the manner least injurious to his allies. In February 1893, Mr Asquith brought in his Bill for suspending the creation of new clerical interests with regard to the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire. This was an avowed preparation for a future Disestablishment Bill, but Mr Chamberlain and fifteen other Liberal Unionists abstained from voting in favour of a Measure which, under other circumstances, they must have supported. He went even further, and in the House of Commons remarked on what he considered the insincerity of Ministers in proposing it. In a general denunciation of "political log-rolling," there was, he said, no genuine majority for any one item in the Government programme. The Welsh voted for Home Rule because they wanted Disestablishment: the Teetotallers for Dis-

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establishment, because they wanted Local Veto; and the Labour Party for everything, because they wanted the Eight Hours Day. Again, on the Employers' Liability Bill, to the main principles of which he was deeply committed, he gave a cordial support to the Amendment, introduced by Lord Dudley, which preserved to men and masters the liberty of contracting themselves out of the new law in the case of existing voluntary arrangements that provided both parties with a more advantageous manner of settling claims for injury or death.

This Mr Chamberlain did at the risk of giving offence to the Trade Unions, whose Leaders strongly opposed the modification demanded, and in the main carried by the House of Lords. Indeed, he pointed out that the Bill, as proposed by the Government, did both less and more than it ought to do. It would not materially reduce the number of accidents because every prudent employer would at once insure himself against the claims that might be made against him. Though the Bill would provide compensation in a number of cases not covered by the existing law, the Government might have given it a much more general scope, and included practically all cases of accident. This could have been done by the establishment and development of voluntary institutions for providing compensation, and it was in this direction that public opinion was tending. Under these circumstances it was a "strong order" to destroy the existing institutions of this character, and to discourage them in the future. No answer had been given to the demand of "hundreds of thousands of working men who simply wanted to be left alone." It was said they had been coerced into

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making this demand. It was a libel on "the very flower of the working classes." In fact, the pressure had been exercised in the other direction.

It would be tedious to trace the minute and somewhat futile discussions in the House of Commons, and its dispute with the Peers, on some of the Clauses in the Parish Councils Bill. At the time these points were considered sufficiently serious, since it was hoped by the Liberals and feared by the Conservatives that this latest extension of Local Government would revolutionise village life and dethrone "the Squire and the Parson," from their traditional influence. In a few parishes it has, no doubt, had that result, but in the vast majority of cases the new representative machinery has, practically, been administered by the same persons who had previously made themselves active in rural business. On this question Mr Chamberlain's attitude was rather that of a moderator than a combatant, and, if in the various recommendations which he pressed on his allies he was inclined to favour concessions to the Government, there was no case in which he could be charged with breaking loose from the Conservatives. Certainly he got no thanks from the other side for what he did.

Again, on the question of Betterment, Mr Chamberlain appeared once more in his new character of mediator, and risked a quarrel with his Progressive supporters. An Improvements Bill, promoted by the London County Council, had contained a Clause giving effect to the principle that the persons whose property would be rendered more valuable by the proposed constructions should be forced to contribute towards the expense. The proposal had been

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struck out by the Peers as invoking a novel doctrine which should not be sanctioned except as part of a general policy deliberately adopted. This Amendment the Commons declined to accept, and at this point the whole Bill was hung up. In order to reach an amicable arrangement, or at least a definite understanding, it was moved in the House of Lords, and carried, that the House of Commons should be invited to join in the appointment of a Select Committee to report on the whole subject.

This offer was declined by the Prime Minister, though Mr Chamberlain, and several other Liberal Unionist members, urged that the offer had been made by the Peers in good faith. It would enable them to retrieve what he regarded as their errors. Why should Ministers refuse them a *locus pœnitentiæ?* But the policy of conciliation was exactly what Mr Gladstone's supporters were unwilling that he should adopt. They were eager to make the Peers "fill up the cup." The more disagreements between Lords and Commons, the better for the General Election. The eventual failure of these tactics does not prove that any more sagacious course was then open to the Liberal Party. That the policy was regarded with some apprehension by the other side was shown by the efforts made by the leading Unionists, and especially by Mr Chamberlain, to reduce the occasions of conflict between the two Houses of Parliament. But, whether prudent or imprudent, the policy had one immediate drawback—it involved the loss of all the important Government Bills. Though the Session had opened in January 1893, it dragged along over Christmas, and was not wound up till March 1894.

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The Employers' Liability Bill had to be withdrawn, and the Parish Councils Act was only passed in a somewhat mutilated condition. Nothing else of consequence had been accomplished.

But this was not the greatest of the misfortunes that fell upon the Liberal Party. It had long been evident that Mr Gladstone had neither the health nor the spirit required for the contentious tasks on which he had entered. The rumour of his approaching resignation published by the *Pall Mall Gazette* on 31st January had been officially contradicted. It was, however, only premature and unauthorised. It proved to be correct. His last speech in the House of Commons was delivered on 1st March 1894, when he announced that, rather than wreck the whole work of the Session, the Government would withdraw their opposition to the Amendments finally proposed by the Lords to the Parish Councils Bill. This he accompanied with a "sorrowful declaration" that the recent differences between the two Houses—not merely on that Bill—had been of no casual or temporary nature. They were differences of conviction, of prepossession, of mental habit, and fundamental tendency. The developments of that year had led to a state of things which could not long continue. The issue between the two Houses had long been postponed—partly through the discretion, circumspection, and reserve which had been shown by the Peers, in the days of the Duke of Wellington, Lord Aberdeen, and others, in the exercise of their "enormous privileges." But Mr Gladstone feared that the spirit of reserve and circumspection had gone by. The House of Commons could not be a judge in its own case. The appeal must be to

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a higher authority. The time at which the judgment of the nation should be invited was for the Executive Government to decide. "My duty terminates," he said, "by calling the attention of the House to the fact, which it is really impossible to set aside, that in considering these Amendments, limited as their scope may seem to some to be, we are considering a part, an essential part, of a question enormously large, a question which has become profoundly acute, which will demand a settlement, and must receive at an early date that settlement from the highest authority."

The dignified language of this unspoken farewell from the aged Statesman to the Assembly in which, for two generations, he had been incomparably the greatest figure, which he could still dominate when he chose to strain his failing powers, was the more pathetic because he had already placed his resignation in the hands of his Sovereign, and because this, his last, utterance from his place in Parliament marked his loyal adherence to a policy which he could not carry on, and which had been adopted, if not against his will, yet without his hearty concurrence. He had never gone cheerfully into a campaign against the House of Lords, and he now gave his consent to it chiefly because he felt that the question was less for himself than his colleagues.

By an arrangement rapidly carried out, which need not be examined here, the succession was given to Lord Rosebery, and a new split was made in the already riven body of the Liberal Party—between the advocates of Home Rule who put that Measure last in their list and those who insisted on keeping it in the first place.

Meantime, the Unionists had been closing up

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their ranks. It was something more than an act of political courtesy, it was a symptom of the approaching Coalition, that Mr Chamberlain had been invited to become the guest of a Conservative Club in Birmingham. The day before he took part in this significant ceremony he delivered a rattling attack on the Government, and scornfully repudiated the claims of the Liberal Party to be considered the real authors of the Free Education policy—Mr Gladstone had never supported the Birmingham League, and the Act of 1870 had been passed by his Ministry in defiance of that body. Even in 1885 he had spoken of the remission of school fees as remote from practical politics. How, then, could his Party claim credit for a Measure which was proposed and carried a few years later by his adversaries? The blame for this last barren Session lay with Ministers themselves, who had won the support of the electors by lavish promises of British reforms, all of which had been postponed for a scheme of Home Rule. All they had done was to set up a feeble agitation against the Peers, and to issue a Circular which excited nothing but ridicule.

Thus, to all intents and purposes, though not in express terms, Mr Chamberlain had entered into partnership with the Conservatives. He associated them with the Radical Unionists in the credit gained by the Free Education Act, and joined them in defence of the House of Lords. It was an auspicious prelude to his declaration of political faith at Edgbaston. The assembled Conservatives of his own city, against whom he had fought so many stiff battles, were informed that, in his belief, the combination of the various Unionist groups was not a mere

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temporary arrangement. He looked to the creation of a new National Party above all sectional aims—to preserve the welfare, even the safety, of the United Kingdom. It should be "sensible of the responsibilities of Empire, mindful of the traditions of a great governing race, and determined to hand down to future generations the great inheritance of a world-wide dominion."

These words, spoken on 30th January 1894, are a sufficient answer to critics who suggest that Mr Chamberlain's Imperialism was suddenly adopted when he found himself at the Colonial Office in 1895, and only then adopted because it gave him a chance of making a figure in that Department. As a matter of fact, it had for some years past been the post on which he had set his political ambition. When there was some talk, though, perhaps, never any definite intention, in 1887, of replacing the Conservative Ministry with a Unionist Coalition, it was the office which he now holds that Mr Chamberlain would then have been ready to accept—which, indeed, he preferred to any other that was available. The belief in our Imperial destinies, to which he has frequently, in recent years, given eloquent and precise expression, was no new growth in his mind. He had begun his political life with some rudiments of that faith, and, if they had been obscured by his association from 1880 to 1885 with Statesmen who cared so much for internal affairs that they almost ignored our interests in other Continents, the instinct had never been quite suppressed. It was roughly awakened by the threatened dismemberment of the United Kingdom; stimulated by co-operation with a Party which thought too much, rather than too little, of our rights and duties outside these Islands; and it has been con-

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firmed by a close acquaintance with the magnitude and complexity of the problems that confront a State which has to conduct the hegemony of a loosely-compacted confederation of races who present, in their various stages of development, a continuous History of Civilisation—from almost primitive barbarism to the very verge of democratic extravagance.

In addressing the practical politicians of the Edgbaston Junior Conservative Club, Mr Chamberlain was not content to sketch the outline of that new Party which he asked then to discern in the future. The promise of a rich banquet at some distant date will not satisfy present hunger. The appetite of the day was best satisfied by solid invective against the other side. Mr Chamberlain provided it with all the air of a cheerful giver. He began by pointing to the gulf that parted him from his old associates. But it was they, not he, who had abandoned their common principles. "The New Radicals," he said, "are never satisfied with making anybody happy unless they can make somebody else unhappy. Their love for Home Rule is only surpassed by their hatred of the Protestant and British minority in Ulster. Their interest in Temperance is conditional on their being able to ruin the publicans. Their advocacy of Compensation for workmen is tempered by their desire to do some injury to the employer. Even their love, their affection, for Parish Councils is conditional on their hostility to the Church."

This utterance sensibly cleared the air. Conservatives could no longer feel distrust of an ally who had made this fierce onslaught on the enemy. There could be no more talk of forgetting and forgiving between Gladstonians and

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Radical Unionists. The quarrel was no longer confined to the Irish Question — it included the whole policy of the Ministerialist Party. Nothing, therefore, that was likely to happen within the next few years—as long a period as practical politicians can consider—could modify the position. It was not altered by the retirement of Mr Gladstone, or by the vacillating professions made by his successor on the subject of Home Rule. At the meeting of the Liberal Party on 12th March, Lord Rosebery said there was no need for a declaration of policy on his part. "We stand where we did. There is no change of measures—only a most disastrous change in men." As to the steadiness of the Cabinet on the Irish Question, it was a sufficient pledge that Mr John Morley not only remained a member, but also refused a higher office than that of Chief Secretary, because he would not sever his career from the cause of Ireland. But only a few hours intervened between this apparently definite assurance from the new Prime Minister and an utterance of quite a different colour.

In the Debate on the Address, Lord Rosebery explained why no new Bill would be brought in that Session. It was not the function of the House of Commons to prepare Bills simply to furnish sport for the House of Lords. As for appealing to the country, the Government would do that when the time was ripe, but would never concede the right of the House of Lords to force a Dissolution of Parliament. Lord Salisbury had declared that, before Home Rule could be given to Ireland, England, as "the predominant member in the partnership of the three Kingdoms, must be convinced of its justice." To this

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Lord Rosebery agreed, though he was aware that it was a "considerable admission," and he qualified it by expressing his belief that Englishmen would soon be converted if Irishmen remained on good behaviour. But he did not mend matters by the suggestion that Home Rule for Ireland must be accompanied by similar, if not equal, decentralising proposals in favour of Wales and Scotland. This was to postpone the Nationalist demand to an indefinite date, while even in principle it was hardly to be distinguished from the position assumed by Mr Chamberlain. It produced indignation among the Irish, and consternation among the English, Home Rulers.

Mr John Morley did what he could to soothe the irritation of the Nationalists, and to explain that his new Chief had no intention of hanging up Home Rule. But Mr Redmond broke into open revolt, and almost from that time it was understood by the Conservative Whips that they might count on the "Parnellite" votes for any Division in which there was a chance of defeating the Government. Mr Chamberlain, of course, took advantage of his adversaries' embarrassment. It was perfectly plain, he said, that Home Rule was to be shelved for the remainder of that Parliament. They were told it would be brought forward again when circumstances would allow. But, as with *Alice in Wonderland*, it was jam yesterday, and jam to-morrow, but never jam to-day. Meantime, the "predominant partner" was to be drugged with the Newcastle Programme, so that he might afterwards be induced to swallow Home Rule!

Evidently, it was necessary for Lord Rosebery to make some further statement. The majority of the Nationalist Party were willing to be per-

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suaded of his good faith, but formal overtures must be made, nor should any time be lost. On 17th March he exhibited that dexterity in gliding out of trouble which almost makes up for the careless ease with which he slips into it. By his language in the House of Lords he had only meant (it appeared) that it was necessary to carry conviction to the hearts of the people of England. By these words he would stand. They were a truism, a platitude. But he had never meant that the Government would wait on an English majority for every reform. At that rate they would never get any reform at all. As a Scotchman he repudiated such a suggestion! This was excellent, since it put him on good terms with the Scottish Liberals to whose support he owed much of his political importance. But his more pressing purpose was to conciliate the Irish Nationalists. This he did by renewing his Home Rule professions, and by promising to bring in another Bill if the Liberals should get a clear majority of 100, no matter of what nationalities it might be composed. As for the threatened opposition of the Ulstermen, Lord Rosebery derided such a menace—they would submit, unless they had England behind their back! This went straight to the heart of the Nationalists, and Mr Dillon hastened to declare that in Lord Rosebery the cause of Ireland had an honest and honourable champion. The Parnellite *intransigents*, however, remained sceptical.

Speaking within a few days in the same city Mr Chamberlain asked what had been the meaning of Lord Rosebery's Edinburgh declaration. "We have a Prime Minister" he said, "who is willing to support Home Rule though he has no belief in its early success. He is willing to dis-

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establish one Church, or to establish three, as may be most convenient. He is willing to abolish the House of Lords, even at the cost of Revolution, though he believes in a Second Chamber. There is no change, then, in policy. But there is a change. There is a change in the attitude of the Prime Minister. In Mr Gladstone we had, at any rate, a man who succeeded in convincing himself the more he tried to convince others. But Lord Rosebery is not convinced, and he does not seem to think that anyone needs conviction." This attack on the new Prime Minister was the more significant because, personally, it was unprovoked. It showed that any hopes of a Liberal Reunion which had been based on the change of Premiership were quite unfounded—that the Radical Unionists would be as firm against a Prime Minister who was lukewarm on Home Rule as against his enthusiastic predecessor.

Nor was this inference weakened by the confessedly awkward position in which Mr Chamberlain was placed when Mr Asquith's Bill was introduced (26th April) for the Disestablishment of the Church in the twelve Welsh counties and in Monmouthshire. He could not honestly oppose this Measure, yet politically, in view of the issues involved, which were far greater than any contained in the scheme itself, it was inexpedient to support Ministers. But for any inconvenience which he felt on this question he found compensation in the Registration Bill which adopted the principle of "One-man One-vote" without satisfying the other catch-cry of "One-vote One-value." Though the state of the Register was a scandal which it was the duty of the Government to deal with, this scheme "raised the manipulation of Elections into a fine art." By abolishing the

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rate-paying qualification Ministers "favoured the wastrel, the ne'er-do-well, the profligate, and the drunkard." No attempt was made to redress the over-representation of Ireland—that would have been for the Government to commit political suicide. In fact, it was a purely partisan measure, and an attempt to pack the National Jury.

Mr Chamberlain's recent invasion of Edinburgh and attack upon the Prime Minister were warmly resented. On May 23rd Lord Rosebery retaliated by a political visit to Birmingham, the headquarters of Radical Unionism. On the five leading questions of the day—on the Church, the House of Lords, the Budget, the Registration Bill, and Local Veto—he charged Mr Chamberlain with inconsistency. In fact, his Liberalism was rapidly vanishing. A few days later, at Bradford, Mr Chamberlain replied by pointing out that the most important charges which Lord Rosebery had made were based on quotations from "The Radical Programme," a book to which he had contributed nothing but the Preface, while he had expressly disclaimed responsibility for the views which it put forward. It was true, of course, that he had attacked the House of Lords: and it might happen in the future that he would again contest the right of an hereditary Chamber to resist the declared will of the great majority of the people. At present, however, the Peers were, he thought, defending the rights of the majority.

More interesting was his appearance at Liverpool in the Autumn (5th September) when he laboured to show that there was nothing incompatible between Conservatism and his own type of Radicalism. Both schools of thought might consistently co-operate for social reform. Here he ventured on the delicate topic of

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making provision for the claims of the aged and deserving poor. He was on safer ground when he advanced the argument which lies at the root of Democratic Imperialism in this country—that the population of these small islands cannot subsist in their present comfort and prosperity except by maintaining the power of the Empire. For this reason it was necessary for the working classes to feel an active interest in foreign questions. From the Liberal Party, as then constituted, there was nothing they could look for. Later in the month Mr Chamberlain delivered a series of speeches at Leeds, by way of counter-blast to the recent proceedings of the National Liberal Federation in that City, and the Manifesto issued against the House of Lords. He began by insisting on the familiar theme that Home Rule was unpopular in England, and could only be carried by the Government if they made an appeal to the country on a number of false issues, raised merely to divert public attention from the real object. Social reform would have to go to the wall because it offered no opportunity for picking a fresh quarrel with the Peers.

As for the Leeds Manifesto, Mr Chamberlain argued that some Second Chamber was necessary. If the Lords were deprived of their suspensive Veto the country would lie at the mercy of a chance majority in the Commons —not, perhaps, a British majority! Was the balance of power to lie in the hands of men whose character and proceedings were alien to the British spirit, who were subsidised with foreign gold, and might be nominated by a foreign organisation? Contrasting the Old Radicalism with the New, he declared that the object of the former had been to raise and

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emancipate the individual; the latter aimed at bringing about a dead level of uniformity, in which the idle, thriftless, and improvident would be treated alike with the honest, industrious, and capable. No Conservative could have been more direct than was Mr Chamberlain in denouncing the mischief of Collectivism. It meant, he said, Confiscation—neither the capital of the rich nor the savings of the poor would be spared. He did not believe, however, that the bulk of the working classes favoured the doctrines of the New Trade Unionism. But the Unionists, if they would combat revolutionary and impracticable schemes, must be prepared with an alternative policy—a policy of that social reform which had been so completely neglected by the present Parliament.

What the articles in that Programme were to be, he afterwards explained at West Birmingham. He had opposed the Local Veto Bill, but admitted that Temperance legislation was required. What he still advocated was an adaptation of the Gothenburg system—which took the trade into Municipal hands, and thus removed the inducements either for pressing the traffic or supplying bad liquor. But it was an essential part of his scheme that the licensed victualler should receive fair compensation.

Another proposal was a considerable extension of the Artisans' Dwellings Act. In theory he had been disposed to favour the Betterment scheme adopted by the London County Council, but in practice the difficulty of working it equitably had proved almost insuperable. It would be found more useful to enable the Local Authority to acquire, at a reasonable price, a portion of the ground surrounding the insanitary area which was to be reconstructed. The enhanced value of the

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whole site would thus become public property. The same result would be achieved as by laying a Betterment charge on individuals while no person would have any reason for complaint.

Workmen should be assisted by loans on easy terms to purchase their dwelling-houses. The repayment might be spread over a term of years, and the State might make a slight profit in the transaction.

With regard to Old Age Pensions, he protested against the recognition of any universal claim. Only those persons should be helped who were willing to help themselves. He expressly repudiated the demand of the National Old Age Pensions League—that so much a week should be paid to every person over sixty years of age who applied for it, the money being taken from other Charities and from the Church of England. To begin with, the funds suggested would be quite inadequate. In the second place, the proposal was made by persons more anxious to disestablish the Church than to set up Old Age Pensions. It was dishonest to put forward a branch of the Liberation Society as though it were an Old Age Pension League—it was drawing the trail of a red-herring across the path.

Arbitration in Trade disputes might be provided by means of a Tribunal in every district, and consisting of a Judge with Assessors specially appointed in each case. Though the decisions of such a Court would have no legal force they would have great moral influence—no Strike was ever successful unless it were backed up by public opinion. Mr Chamberlain did not countenance the idea of a Universal and Compulsory Eight Hours Day, but there might be a system of Local Option with regard to Mines, and the hours of

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shopkeepers and their assistants might be reduced in the same way. As to Employers' Liability he favoured an arrangement by which compensation should be secured, without expense or litigation, for all kinds of injuries. Finally, he was prepared to restrict the immigration of Pauper Aliens.

At Durham a little later (16th October), he defined more precisely his position with regard to the Church of England. He should vote for Mr Asquith's Bill for Welsh Disestablishment, though he disliked the spirit in which the "principle of Voluntaryism" was being carried into effect. The question should have been approached in Wales as it had been in Ireland—as one of national and religious importance, not as one of jealousy and competing sects. If the Church in Wales were to be disestablished he would claim that the terms accorded to it should not be less generous than those granted to the Church of Ireland.

After this promise it was clear that the Conservatives would have no solid reason to complain of the abstract support which he might give to a Bill that could by no human possibility pass into law. They were delighted, and a little surprised, by his declaration about the House of Lords. He was, he said, no defender of an hereditary legislature. But he was a strong upholder of a Second Chamber. Until a better could be found, he should "stick to the House of Lords." On the one hand, it was not strong enough to resist the clearly expressed will of the people: on the other, it could "secure a period of delay, and consideration, discussion, and an appeal to the country." And an appeal to the country! This was not in so many words an admission of the Peers' claim to force a Dissolution of Parliament. Indeed, no such claim had ever been asserted by any judicious

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supporter of the House of Lords, though the pretension had often been imputed to the Peers—by Mr Chamberlain himself, as well as by other Radicals. But his words on this occasion carry a clear admission that in his opinion the House of Lords would be entitled, on any great question of the day, to insist on the Bill which they had rejected either being dropped or submitted as the test question at a General Election.

On 22nd November, Mr Chamberlain summed up, at Heywood, the case for the Unionists against the Government. "You may, if you like, try to disestablish and disendow the Church in Wales; and, if you succeed, in my opinion—though I sympathise with the object as a matter of abstract principle—nobody will be one penny the better for it. You may, as I have said, try to disestablish the Welsh Church, or, you may, on the other hand, try to become the owners of your own lands. You may attempt to pass an Irish Land Bill, or you may attempt to get Old Age Pensions for yourselves. You may try to put down drinking, to prevent any man getting a glass of beer; or you may try, with me, to prevent drunkenness and to restrict the vice of drinking. Lastly, you may enter into a campaign against the House of Lords which will last, as Lord Rosebery himself has warned you, for years, and, it may be, for generations; or you may prefer what I believe to be the wiser course, you may enter on a campaign against want and misery, and you may try to add something to the sum of human happiness. You cannot have both these policies at the same time."

It was universally believed at the end of 1894 that an appeal to the country would be made in the following year. By-elections had not been

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favourable to the Government, and in the House of Commons their majority was notoriously unsteady. When Parliament met on 5th February the chief Measures mentioned in the Queen's Speech related to Irish Land, the restoration of Evicted Tenants, Welsh Disestablishment, Local Veto, Plural Voting, and Trade Conciliation. The length of the list was its sufficient condemnation, and this was, in effect, what Mr Chamberlain declared in his Amendment to the Address. The primary policy of the Government, he said, was to pass a Home Rule Bill for Ireland. This had been admitted in the speeches of Sir William Harcourt and Mr John Morley. But in that policy they were out of harmony with the opinion of the country. Indeed, if they did not know this to be the case, they would have dissolved Parliament when the Peers rejected Mr Gladstone's Bill in 1893. If they had done so, and if the country had supported them, the House of Lords would have given way. But on their own confession "the predominant partner" was against them. As had been said of a previous Administration, though they had forgotten how to govern they had not learned how to resign. To cover their failure, they raised the good old cry "Down with the House of Lords!" They had brought out this favourite piece which had never failed to draw, but on this occasion it had not "taken." Why? Because it had never before been mounted with such shabby accessories and acted by so weak a company. The secondary policy of Ministers having fared no better than the primary, they were now engaged in the tertiary policy of "filling up the cup." They were bringing in a number of Measures, not intended to pass, in the hope that one amongst

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them would help them to pick a plausible quarrel with the Peers. An attempt had been made to damage himself by the publication of a private letter.* He was prepared to stand by what he had written on the subject of Disestablishment. But he had expressed only his personal opinions —so far as he knew, they were not shared by any other member of the Unionist Party.

When the Division was taken on Mr Chamberlain's Amendment the majority for Ministers was only 14 (297 against 283), the followers of Mr Redmond having voted with the Opposition. Evidently, as Mr Chamberlain had declared, "the Government were tottering." It would have been no surprise if they had made up their minds at once to take the "inevitable plunge." They decided, however, to stay on until they should be defeated in the House of Commons, and, as things turned out, they had some justification for hoping to get safely through the Session. On the Welsh Disestablishment Bill they obtained a majority of 44 for the Second Reading. Their Irish Land Bill reached the same stage without a Division being challenged, though not without an

* "Disestablishment in Wales must come," he observed, "and the only question is whether it shall be accompanied by a just treatment of the Church in regard to its funds. This can be secured now by the Unionist Party, and Churchmen would be wise if they were to urge their leaders to devote themselves to this part of the subject. If, on the contrary, they meet the present agitation with an absolute *non possumus*, they may probably find that when it is next brought forward, the opportunity of a compromise will have been lost. The Welsh Church is entitled to liberal, and even generous, terms; and if, under these circumstances, it is freed from the connection with the State, it will, in Mr Chamberlain's belief, rise to a position of influence and usefulness that it has never yet enjoyed."—*Aberystwith Observer.*

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interesting Debate. After a sharp passage of arms with Mr Dillon (whose conciliatory language in the House Mr Chamberlain contrasted with his advice to the Irish tenants) he declared that he had himself long been in favour of transferring the ownership from the landlord to the cultivator. This he had learned from Mr Bright and it had been confirmed by Mr Parnell. The Bill of 1881 had only been a temporary Measure, but all the safeguards it created would be destroyed by this new proposal. The value of land would not be diminished but destroyed. The one true solution of the agrarian question was Land Purchase, and this would be impeded rather than assisted by the Bill. The Government were introducing uncertainty over matters which had been settled. The Irish tenant was too shrewd to go into court to buy his holding so long as this uncertainty existed. Nevertheless, the Bill had good points, and he should support it if Ministers would accept reasonable Amendments in Committee.

In London politics, apart from his abstract leaning to the Betterment principle, Mr Chamberlain has given his support to the Moderates, who, for all practical purposes, are identical with the Conservatives. He never was enamoured of the Municipal system as it is worked in most, though not all, the great cities in the United States, and the closer acquaintance which he has gained by his visits to that country convinced him that the English boroughs are more efficiently and much more cheaply administered. Here there is no corruption—or none of which serious account need be taken—and the expenditure, in proportion to the population, he estimates at one-fifth, or at most one-fourth, of the cost in America. He

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has laid down, as essential conditions of Municipal efficiency, first, that the permanent officials shall be so well remunerated as not to be exposed to the temptation of indirect profits, and that men should be obtained for the public service as well qualified as these employed by the best private firms; and, secondly, that the Constituency shall not be too large for the member to be in reasonably close touch with the electors. The former condition had been almost ignored by the Progressive majority in the London County Council, though recently there has been an improvement in this respect. The second condition was rendered impossible by the constitution of the Council itself; the fault lies with Parliament, or rather with the Conservative Government in 1888. "A population of 500,000," Mr Chamberlain has written, "is practically the largest number that can be governed from one centre with the individual attention and constant assiduity that have contributed so much to the usefulness and popularity of corporate work. Many observers, friendly to the work and careful of the reputation of the London County Council, regret that the establishment of a central authority did not follow, rather than precede, the creation of Local Councils dealing with more moderate areas, and fear that the possible outcome may be, when the first flush of public interest has passed way, the permanent institution of a great centralised bureaucratic administration, jealous of its authority, wedded to its own methods, and gradually losing touch with the people for whose benefit it exists. Decentralisation is one of the secrets of successful Local Government, and it is an empty name in connection with a Local Authority which professes to look after the

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health, the comfort, and the domestic arrangements of nearly 5,000,000 of people."

In this Article, published in the *Nineteenth Century*, Mr Chamberlain clearly foreshadowed the creation of the new London Boroughs which was to be carried out by the future Unionist Government. Though he does not appear to have made any express declaration as to the absorption, once proposed by London Radicals, of the City within the Administrative County of London, such a scheme would have been quite alien to the principle of decentralisation by which he sets, perhaps, an excessive store. On 6th February 1895, he defined his position with regard to London politics, in a speech delivered in Stepney, in view of the approaching General Election for the County Council. He denounced the idea of setting up a great central body which would take all the credit over and above a number of Local Boards which were to do all the drudgery—a great Municipal planet at Spring Gardens with several little satellites revolving round it, and shining with a pale and reflected light.

The two great questions of local life in London were, he said, the Housing of the Poor and the treatment of the Unemployed. The solution of both lay in the reconstruction of insanitary areas. But the London County Council had done little in this direction, because the Progressives would not accept a form of Betterment which had satisfied the Manchester Corporation. The proposal to establish Municipal workshops he would not countenance—it must lead to jobbery. Had the Council done for their *employés* more than an honourable and just private employer would have done? An incau-

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tious enthusiast cried out "Yes!" That, retorted Mr Chamberlain, was a charge of bribery and corruption! But he did not make it, did not believe it. If, however, the Council had done no more than a fair private employer would do, what on earth had they to boast about? They were a public body, trusted with public money, and they had no right to be "generous" at the expense of their constituents. That was the beginning of the "Tammany Hall" *régime*, under which public officials were paid extravagant salaries, and rendered political services in return. "We are not going to descend to that level in England," he said. Not many of Mr Chamberlain's speeches have provoked more adverse comment from his opponents. Here, they said, was the Leader of "Municipal Socialism" in Birmingham turning his back on the creed that gave him his first promotion in public life! The reply was that the distinction which he drew between the cases of London and Birmingham was based upon the difference of size between the two places—the one was within, the other was without, the limits of efficient self-administration.

Reference has already been made to the Leamington incident and Mr Chamberlain's attitude with regard to the Welsh Church. These matters had caused just enough dissatisfaction among a group of the Conservatives for the Liberals to suggest that a quarrel had broken out between the Unionist Parties. It was thought advisable, therefore, to dispose of this exaggeration. Speaking to the Primrose League (26th April), Mr Balfour declared that it was not worth while to repudiate the statement that personal differences had arisen between himself and Mr Chamberlain. Never had a man received

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more generous support, he declared, than he had received from the Leader of the Liberal Unionist Party in the House of Commons. Never had their friendship been more cordial than at that moment. The attacks on Mr Chamberlain had only proceeded from a fraction of the Conservative Party. The Compacts of 1886 and 1888 were artificial and temporary arrangements—necessary for a period of transition. That period would soon pass away, and be followed, he hoped, by a fusion of the two Unionist Parties. He afterwards read a letter from Lord Salisbury. It was untrue that the Conservatives, so their Leader wrote, were no longer sensible of the services rendered to the common cause by the Liberal Unionists, and especially by Mr Chamberlain. They had always recognised "most gratefully" the "disinterested and straightforward loyalty with which Mr Chamberlain had devoted his great authority and his splendid powers" to the defence of the Union. Lord Salisbury felt sure that members of the Primrose League would let it be seen that the bonds which held the Unionist Party together were not weakened, and that their combined efforts would not be relaxed.

At St James's Hall (22nd May) Mr Chamberlain made a suitable reply. It had been feared at one time, he said, that by joining forces with the Conservative Party the Liberal Unionists would retard the progress of Reform. Had this apprehension been fulfilled, the sacrifice would have been justified. It would have been better to give up Reform for a time—until the enemy had been driven outside the gates. Happily, however, the Liberal Unionists found that they were not lending any support to Reaction. The Measures passed by the Conservatives in 1886-1892, with the "help

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of the Liberal Unionists," compared favourably, in their material results, with those of any previous Administration. The friendliness and loyalty of the Conservative Leaders had been beyond question. The alliance was destined to last and bear rich fruit. To this general profession he gave a special point, by making an announcement which went to the heart of the Conservative County Members—amongst whom were found the chief murmurers against his recent actions. He promised his concurrence in a scheme for reducing the burdens on land. Something beyond bare sympathy was due to the depressed agricultural industry. It might be found possible to relieve the farmers of part of the excessive rates which they were then paying, and something might be done to attach the labourer to the soil, and counteract the attractions of the towns.

This was definite and satisfactory, the County Tories thought, and the passing cloud was quickly cleared away. The two Parties worked together with a will, as though the Government had already been beaten, and Parliament dissolved. Still, however, Ministers succeeded, thanks to the excellent services of their Whips, in staving off the evil day. Looking at the question from the other point of view, Mr Chamberlain, somewhat brutally, compared them with the condemned criminal who was not in great haste that the show should begin, and who

> "Now fitted the halter, now traversed the cart,
> And often took leave, but was loth to depart."

This speech was made on 28th May, but it was not till 21st June that the bolt fell. The adverse vote on the Army Estimates—brought about by what the Liberals called a dirty trick, and the Union-

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ists applauded as a smart manœuvre—might have been reversed by a strong or sanguine Administration. Indeed, some supporters of the Government advised them to take that course and carry on public business to the normal end of the Session. The decision to resign office was, however, rendered necessary by the attitude of the Minister for War, who flatly refused to remain at his post, and his retirement would have involved a general reconstruction of the Cabinet. This was an operation too dangerous to be undertaken by a Prime Minister with a small and precarious minority. On 24th June, the Queen sent for Lord Salisbury, whom she commanded to form a new Administration.

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CHAPTER XII

THE UNIONIST ADMINISTRATION, 1895-1900

On receiving the Queen's summons, Lord Salisbury held a brief consultation with the Duke of Devonshire and Mr Chamberlain, as well as with some of his old Conservative colleagues. At first he was disposed to stipulate, as in 1885, that the outgoing Government should promise to co-operate in winding-up the business of the Session. Meantime, however, the ground had been cut away under his feet by Ministers in both Houses having announced their resignation. It was necessary, therefore, that Lord Salisbury should accept the succession without delay, nor was it less inevitable to invite the Liberal Unionists to share the responsibility. It had been on this understanding that the new Prime Minister went down to Windsor, and after his second journey on the following day it was made known that the chief Offices of State had been filled. With the duties of Prime Minister Lord Salisbury combined those of Foreign Secretary; the Duke of Devonshire became Lord President of the Council; Mr Balfour, First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons; the Chancellorship of the Exchequer was given to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. Mr Goschen was made First Lord

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of the Admiralty, and Mr Chamberlain went to the Colonial Office.

The difficulty of allocating these Departments had been modified by two paramount considerations. In the first place, there could be no doubt that the new Leader of the House of Commons must be Mr Balfour. His claim could not be, and in fact was not, disputed. No other man would have been accepted by the Conservatives, nor did Mr Chamberlain ask for or desire that position. Had he asked for the Chancellorship of the Exchequer his personal services to the Unionist cause would have entitled him to the second place, in point of dignity, in the House of Commons; but to elevate him, as it were, over the head of Mr Goschen might have seemed like putting a slight on the very able and unselfish Statesman who in 1887 had helped Lord Salisbury out of what seemed an awkward position. So far as capacity was in question, either Mr Goschen or Mr Chamberlain was, by general consent, admirably competent for control of the national finances, but Mr Goschen declined the post when it was offered him, and it was decided to confer it upon a Conservative politician who, in spite of his considerable attainments, could not be regarded as a rival of either of those to whom he had been preferred. At the Admiralty Mr Goschen was well suited, and there was no Department so acceptable to Mr Chamberlain as the Colonial Office. It was, as we have seen, the one to which he had been destined eight years before, in what then seemed the possible event of a Ministerial reconstruction, and many of his recent utterances in Opposition suggested that he had already discerned, and was anxious

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to obtain, in the administration of Imperial business, an opening for constructive Statesmanship.

To the public, however, the appointment was something of a surprise. The office had generally been held by second-rate men or by those whose star was on the decline. It was suggested by candid friends in the Liberal Party that he had been sent to the Colonial Office in order that he might be kept too hard at Departmental work for taking any active part in Cabinet business, or for making speeches up and down the country. But, whatever may have been the opinion of outsiders, neither then nor afterwards, neither in public nor private, did Mr Chamberlain express dissatisfaction. Now it is one of his faults, or merits, that he cannot long suppress his feelings. If he had cherished any resentment, it was bound, sooner or later, to come out—and come out in the most unmistakable manner. Had he thought in June 1895 that his merits had been insufficiently recognised, he would have considered that the discredit lay, not with himself, but with the Prime Minister, and he would have felt no scruple about placing the blame on the proper shoulders. The politician for whom an adversary has invented the word "pushful" would not have quietly acquiesced, when he was in a position to make his own terms, in what he regarded as derogatory treatment.

The truth was that the new Colonial Secretary had realised that, for the present at least, Home politics were practically played out. The Constitutional reforms which he had once advocated he could no longer take any active part in promoting, except at a sacrifice of principle which he was not prepared even to

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contemplate. For a Radical who would not accept Home Rule there was no longer any place in the Liberal Party. In an attack on certain ancient institutions which in Mr Chamberlain's eyes were either useless or harmful he could find no partners except among those who had become his irreconcilable enemies. In the tasks of constructive Statesmanship, on the other hand, the Conservatives would, he believed, be more useful and more docile associates, and as Lord Salisbury's official colleague he might hope to make an even better record than he had achieved as an irresponsible adviser. But neither the Home Office nor the Exchequer — certainly none of the other Departments — offered so much scope for individual energy as the one which he had chosen.

By training and association, if not by deliberate intellectual choice, he had always been a strong supporter of Free Trade, and on many occasions he had denounced the fallacies of the Protectionism that prevailed sixty years ago. He had never wavered in his support of the doctrine which Cobden and Bright and Charles Villiers incorporated into our fiscal system. But he has not been willing to keep his eyes closed to the changes which have recently occurred in the economical position of the country. Little by little, we are being edged out of foreign markets, until at the present time there are few—except in those Dependencies to which we have not yet accorded Self-Government —where we can do business except at a greater or less disadvantage. This is a tendency of which Statesmanship is bound to take serious account. Mr Chamberlain's views on Preferential Trade with the Colonies, and his less definite aspirations after an Imperial Zollverein, will be described in a later

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Chapter. It might not be difficult to quote passages from his speeches which would suggest that the opinions he has since expressed had long existed, though in a latent form, within his mind. At present, however, they had not been developed. They were the outcome of subsequent and unforeseen events.

In 1895, certainly, they had not taken definite shape. Then, as now, the volume of our Trade outside the Empire was so vastly in excess of the transactions between Mother Country and Colonies that no consideration of Imperial sentiment could be allowed to turn the scale. But already the area of our commercial liberty was being seriously diminished. The M'Kinley Tariff was aimed by the United States more directly against this than any other European country, while the rigid Treaties of Commerce between the various central Powers of the Continent were scarcely less hostile than the fiscal legislation of the French Republic. Our Foreign Trade—part even of our Colonial Trade—was existing merely on sufferance, a sufferance that would not be extended one year longer than might suit the convenience of our rivals. If we meant to improve, or maintain, our commercial position, we must do one of two things. Either we should be compelled to use the same weapons of pacific compulsion as our competitors—*i.e.*, we must turn Protectionist like the rest of the world—or we must exert ourselves to retain all the existing neutral markets, and create fresh outlets for British enterprise. It was to the latter alternative that Mr Chamberlain at this time inclined. In our Colonies and Protectorates—extended as they had recently been by the series of delimitations carried out by Lord Salisbury in Africa—might, perhaps,

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be found an escape from the growing, if not yet formulated, demand for a modification of our fiscal system.

Sanguine, therefore, as to the possibilities of his position, and confident of a great victory in the General Election of 1895, Mr Chamberlain had flung himself heartily into the political fight. The chief articles in his Programme were unchanged—Better Housing for the Working-classes, a comprehensive scheme of Compensation for Injuries, and some form of Provision for Old Age. These were practically the same inducements as were held out by Conservative candidates, though on the last head many of them were reticent or significntly silent. But Liberal Unionists and Conservatives alike dwelt chiefly on the shortcomings of the Liberal Government. This, indeed, was their strongest card. The Gladstone-Rosebery Administration had attacked many interests, alarmed almost every class, and had not inspired complete confidence amongst its thick-and-thin supporters. Its defeat was a certainty, admitted by its own prophets, though the extent of the coming collapse had not been foreseen by the most sanguine of its opponents. Although the total turn-over of votes in Great Britain was estimated at less than a quarter of a million, the successes of the Unionists were so luckily distributed that they obtained a majority of 152 in the new House of Commons. This disproportionate advantage was, no doubt, partly due to the existence, in many Constituencies, of a compact Liberal Unionist body, not large enough to make any show, but sufficient to carry a seat. In every district the new Party had proved its importance, but in its recognised centres—in London and Scotland as well as in

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the Midlands — it had almost regained the original strength of 1886. Then they had been between 70 and 80; in 1892 they were reduced to 45; now they were over 70 again. Nor in the allocation of "spheres of influence" under the compact had there been any friction between the two Coalition Parties. Of the five Constituencies as to which reasonable question might arise, three had been conceded by Liberal Unionists to Conservatives, and two by Conservatives to Liberal Unionists. Mr Chamberlain, therefore, was justified in his boast at the Birmingham Conservative Club, that the Government of which he was a member had "the largest and most homogeneous majority of our time." Naturally, he gave special credit to his own supporters in Birmingham and the neighbouring Constituencies — a solid wedge of Unionist representation.

In the final distribution of offices under Lord Salisbury, the Liberal Unionists obtained their proportionate share of the Prime Minister's patronage. Besides the Duke of Devonshire, Mr Chamberlain, and Mr Goschen, they were represented within the Cabinet by Lord James of Hereford (Duchy of Lancaster) and the Marquess of Lansdowne (War Office); and outside that privileged, if unduly enlarged, body, by Mr Austen Chamberlain (Civil Lord, Admiralty), Lord Selborne (Under Secretary, Colonial Office), Mr Jesse Collings (Under Secretary, Home Office), Mr T. W. Russell (Secretary, Local Government Board), and Mr Powell Williams (Financial Secretary, War Office). But though it was complained by disappointed Conservative aspirants that Mr Chamberlain had carried to a fault the recognised political virtue of rewarding

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one's friends, no personal exception could fairly be taken to the previous record of those Liberal Unionists who directly owed their promotion to his support of their claims. Several very capable young Conservatives had for the time to stand aside—this was part of the price paid for the Liberal Unionist alliance—but on the first opportunity room was made for them, and such murmuring as was subsequently heard has not been directed against any exercise of undue influence by the Colonial Secretary.

It was an instance of political irony that the Government which was placed in power chiefly that the country might have a quiet time, after the ineffective agitations of the previous three years, should, within a few months of taking Office, be called upon to face the most serious, because the most prolonged and complicated, crisis within the memory of living Englishmen. In the Crimean War we were engaged with a single enemy, but we had powerful allies; the Indian Mutiny was an agony of sentiment rather than a menace to our place in the world. In 1878, and again in 1885, we had been brought within close view of War with Russia, but never till the end of 1895 and the opening of 1896 had we been confronted with undisguised hostility by several Great Powers at once. Our relations with the French Republic had not recovered from the strain caused by the quarrel over Siam; Russia was irritated by our refusal to assist in coercing Japan into giving up the fruits of her victory over China; President Cleveland, playing for the vote of the Anti-British Democrats of the Southern and Western States, issued his Venezuelan Message, which was almost tantamount to a threat of War; finally, the Jameson Raid had

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complicated our already tangled relations with the Transvaal, and led to a message from the German Emperor to Mr Krüger which Englishmen resented as a public insult to themselves. For some weeks it seemed possible that the opinion of the country would insist on active steps being taken to wipe out this affront. The danger was, not that we should be attacked, but that, in spite of other entanglements, we should ourselves be the aggressors. All this happened within a few weeks of the day on which Mr George Curzon, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, declared, not without apparent justification, that we might look forward to a period of tranquillity under the prudent and sagacious administration of our Foreign Affairs by Lord Salisbury. The optimistic forecast was derided at the time by unfriendly critics—though they little guessed how prompt and signal would be their justification.

Mr Chamberlain, like the rest of his colleagues, believed when he took office that he had before him several years of quiet administrative work. He found at the Colonial Office a Staff of public servants at least as efficient as those in any other Department. It was often said in the Colonies that the permanent officials in Downing Street were not more remarkable for the preciseness of their acquaintance with local affairs than for the courtesy with which they listened to every reasonable suggestion. The preliminaries were always smooth and satisfactory: the hitch was only felt when something had to be done. Everything was made ready, but nothing was accomplished. The efficiency ended as soon as the business passed from the hands of the permanent officials to those of the political Chief. Then began the delays and excuses, ending in the

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usual decision to leave things as they were. The bad reputation of the Colonial Office—in spite of its capable and reasonably vigorous Staff—had been earned by a succession of Secretaries of State who either wished to do nothing, or were discouraged by their colleagues from entering on any course that might entail increased expenditure and involve the Government in new responsibilities. Since every Colonial question more or less impinged on matters with which the Foreign Office was or might be concerned, a tradition had grown up that the former should be managed as if it were an unimportant *annexe* to the latter.

In order to maintain a state of things which saved trouble at home, if it bred discontent in the Empire, it had been the custom to send politicians to the Colonial Office who combined a reasonable aptitude for Departmental routine with a natural dislike for taking the initiative, and who would allow their trained subordinates to conduct business along the traditional lines. The old regime was abruptly upset as soon as Mr Chamberlain entered the Office. It is much to the credit alike of Minister and Staff that the new order of things was set going without personal friction. It is one of Mr Chamberlain's most useful qualities that he can get good work out of capable men. Any energetic Chief can manage a corps of industrious clerks, but it requires a higher sort of power to appeal successfully to the brains and zeal of able and, possibly, self-sufficient experts—especially when they have for years been allowed to go their own irreproachable way. But it was not long before Mr Chamberlain had established a thoroughly good understanding—not based entirely on the expectation of future favours. It is, however, true that

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he never forgets those who have rendered him useful services, nor will anything tempt him to throw over a subordinate who has honestly been doing his best under difficult circumstances. On more than one occasion he has been involved in an awkward position through the faulty judgment of a distant agent. Privately he has visited the mistake with the sharpest rebuke, but in public he has assumed full responsibility, and put the best aspect on a policy which he has quietly set himself to reverse. That easy sort of candour which shows itself in giving away other people may have its public uses, but it does not promote *esprit de corps* in a public Department.

Between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office it was certain that a good understanding would be maintained so long as Lord Salisbury should remain Chief of the one and Mr Chamberlain of the other. The war of words which had been so fiercely waged between them in the early Eighties had cleared the air, and resulted in a mutual sense of intellectual respect. Their long association in the work of keeping Mr Gladstone out of power—or, at least, out of what they considered mischief—had led to as close an intimacy as the Conservative Statesman permitted himself to enjoy with any of those colleagues who were not members of his own family. In spite of the confident prophecies which had been uttered by adversaries who hoped for sharp dissensions in the new Cabinet, it is well known that the personal relations of Lord Salisbury and Mr Chamberlain were, from this point, so uniformly harmonious that no difficulty was experienced in adjusting any political differences that may have arisen on various questions of the day.

In subsequent Chapters a detailed account will

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be given of Mr Chamberlain's administration of the different Colonies where history has shown itself in the making. Here it will be sufficient to review his general attitude with regard to Imperial and domestic politics during the last seven or eight years. One of his first pronouncements on taking Office was a promise not to neglect the interest of our "undeveloped estates" in the more backward Dependencies of West Africa and the West Indies—especially in the improvement of the means of communication. On this point he explained his views to a Deputation of influential merchants :—

"As to the general principle," he said, "I go certainly as far as the farthest of you go; and I am very anxious that my fellow-countrymen should understand that we hope to develop the resources of such Colonies as those of which you have been speaking to the fullest extent. It is only in such developments that I see any solution of those social problems by which we are surrounded. Plenty of employment and a contented people go together, and there is no way of securing plenty of employment except by creating new markets and developing the old ones. The only dominion which in any way compared with the British dominion was that of the Romans, and it was to the credit of the Romans that they left behind them, wherever they went, traces of their passage and their civilisation in the form of admirable public works. I am sorry to say that Great Britain has largely neglected its duty in that respect in the countries under her care. I admit to you, as I did to the House of Commons last night, that it is in a certain sense a new policy. It is a great policy. It is one, no doubt, open to criticism and to the fullest con-

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sideration. You cannot undertake a policy of this kind without a certain amount of risk; but if the people of this country, out of their superfluous wealth, are not willing to invest some of it in the development of what I have called their great estate, then I see no future for these countries, and I think it would probably have been better if they had never come under our rule. I hope that you, who have more than a mere general interest in these countries, will do what you can to popularise the subject.

"If that is the general policy the Government have in view, undoubtedly there is no more favourable instance on which to try it than the West African Colonies. There was a time when there was a feeling adverse to these Colonies, and when we should have been very well pleased to be rid of them for the benefit of any other Power; but that feeling has now, I believe, quite disappeared. There is no doubt that hardly any part of her Majesty's dominions presents such opportunities for a rapidly increasing trade as these Gold Coast Colonies. You may rest assured that every assistance that we can give will be given to promote and assist better communication with the interior. A great deal has been done, as you are aware. The Lagos Railway may be said to have almost commenced—that is, we have authorised the building of the bridges, and we shall authorise the building of the railways as soon as the surveys are completed, and push them on as rapidly as possible. The Gold Coast Railway has been surveyed, and will be begun as soon as the point of commencement has been arranged. In Sierra Leone the survey has been completed for 150 miles. We have, however, a suggestion from Colonel

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Cardew for some modification of the line of route, and these are details which will require some little consideration; but we will not waste time."

Mr Chamberlain's qualifications for the post which he had assumed he has himself defined as his "belief in the British Empire," and "belief in the British race"—which is, he thinks, "the greatest of the governing races that the world has ever seen." On this point he deprecates the self-criticism in which Englishmen are apt to indulge. Though it does no harm at home it leads to misinterpretation abroad, where, not unnaturally, we are taken at our own valuation—if it happens to be unfavourable.

In the selection of Governors for those Colonies which possess Democratic Constitutions, he has been careful to ascertain beforehand that his nomination would not be unacceptable to the local politicians. His experience in Municipal administration at Birmingham has enabled him to understand and sympathise with the susceptibilities of public men who are very great persons at home, and fret under the semblance of external control. It would be absurd to suggest that Mr Chamberlain is specially gifted with the indefinable quality of tact, but, in his dealings with the somewhat aggressively independent Statesmen of Australasia, he has avoided unpleasant friction more successfully than predecessors who scrupulously observed and rigorously exacted all the courtesies of Diplomatic etiquette. When he has talked with the Colonial Premiers it has been "as man to man," not as a great personage of State granting an audience to a provincial Mayor. He has seemed to be, because

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he really has been, more anxious to learn than to instruct; to accept suggestions rather than to lay down the law. Colonial visitors to Downing Street, not merely Ministers and official delegates, have experienced a friendly greeting and cordial attention from the Chief of a Department in which they had expected to be met with distant affability and polite excuses for procrastination.

An excellent impression was produced in the opinion of the more progressive Colonies, which are chiefly concerned with commercial interests, by the Circular which the new Minister issued in November 1895:—

"1. I am impressed with the extreme importance of securing as large a share as possible of the mutual trade of the United Kingdom and the Colonies for British producers and manufacturers, whether located in the Colonies or in the United Kingdom.

"2. In the first place, therefore, I wish to investigate thoroughly the extent to which, in each of the Colonies, foreign imports of any kind have displaced, or are displacing, similar British goods, and the causes of such displacement.

"3. With this object, I take this opportunity of inviting the assistance of your Government in obtaining a Return which will show for the years 1884, 1889, and 1894—

"(*a*) The value (if any) of all articles, specified in the classification annexed, imported into the Colony under your Government from any foreign country, or countries, whenever (and only when) the value of any article so imported from any foreign country, or countries, was 5 per cent. or upwards of the total value of that article imported into the Colony from all sources, whether within

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or without the British Empire, and when the total value of that article imported was not less than £500.

"(*b*) The reasons which may have in each case induced the Colonial importer to prefer a foreign article to similar goods of foreign manufacture.

"4. These reasons (which should take the shape of a Report on each article separately, of which the foreign import exceeded 5 per cent. of the whole import, and of which the total value imported was not less than £500, as defined above) should be classified and discussed under one or other of the following heads :—

"(*a*) Price (delivered in the Colony) of the foreign article as compared with the British.

"The term 'price' is not intended to include the Duty (if any) levied in a Colony; it is the ordinary price in bond, and this should be clearly understood in making the Report.

"But where it is found impossible to give any except the wholesale price (Duty paid), this should be stated, and the exact amount of Duty entering into the price should be given.

"In treating of price, regard should be had to cost of transport, facility of communication with any given country, subsidies to shipping, special railway rates, Bounties on export, terms of credit or payment given by British or foreign exporters, rates of discount, etc.

"(*b*) Quality and finish, as to which full particulars should be given.

"(*c*) Suitability of the goods for the market, their style or pattern.

"In connection with this, and in illustration of the reasons for the displacement of British goods of any class, it is important that patterns or specimens of the goods preferred should be sent

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home, unless the bulk is very great. This will be necessary chiefly in those cases where the difference cannot be fairly described in writing.

"(*d*) Difference of making-up or packing, as to which full particulars should be given.

"(*e*) False marking, such as piracy of trade marks, false indications of origin, or false indications of weight, measure, size, or number.

"(*f*) Any other cause which may exist should, of course, be stated.

"It sometimes happens that imports which actually came from foreign countries pass through Great Britain, and are included in Colonial statistics as British. Where this is a matter of common knowledge, I shall be obliged to you if you will treat of these imports under the headings embraced in this paragraph, notwithstanding the fact that they are not distinguished in the returns.

"5. With a view to facilitating the return, I annex to this despatch a draft of the form under which the particulars above requested may be returned; a list of commodities which is intended, as far as possible, to secure uniformity in making the return; and a schedule of instructions as to filling up the return, which I would beg you to commend to the attention of those on whom the preparation of the return may fall.

"6. To select the best classification to guide your advisers in their investigations has been a task of some difficulty. Most Colonies have classifications of their own, usually admirable of their kind; but as they have been mainly compiled for the special Tariff purposes of each Colony, they differ considerably from one another, and do not afford a basis of classification generally applicable to all Colonies. I have, therefore, on

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the whole, thought it best to adopt the condensed classification used by the Board of Trade in the annual Statistical Abstract for the exports of the United Kingdom. At the same time, I suggest that those responsible in each Colony for furnishing the returns for which I am asking should expand their Return under each chief heading by such detailed sub-heads as may be suggested either by the ordinary Colonial Returns, or by the course of trade in the particular Colony; and in this connection I append a schedule of subdivisions suggested by various Chambers of Commerce in this country.

"7. I am further desirous of receiving from you a Return of any products of the Colony under your Government which might advantageously be exported to the United Kingdom, or other parts of the British Empire, but do not at present find a sufficient market there, with any information in regard to quality, price, or freight which may be useful to British importers. I mention the matter here that you may be prepared with information; but I am contemplating the preparation of a further and fuller Despatch on this branch of the subject.

"8. I am well aware how much has been, and is being, done in this direction by the Self-Governing Colonies through the High Commissioner for Canada, and through the Agents General, and also by the Imperial Institute, the Royal Colonial Institute, and other public bodies.

"I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my admiration for the excellence of this work; but on a matter of such importance no additional efforts or opportunities of acquiring information can be superfluous.

"9. I shall be glad to have these returns as

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soon as possible, and shall greatly appreciate your expedition in the matter."

At the time when the South African trouble was coming to a head, the Colonial Secretary attended a Banquet held to celebrate the completion of the railway between Natal and the Transvaal. He made a brief reference to the possibility of a future Customs Union embracing the whole Empire :—

"It is a dream which has vividly impressed itself on the mind of the English-speaking race, and who does not admit that dreams of that kind, which have so powerful an influence upon the imagination of men, have, somehow or another, an unaccountable way of being realised in their own time? If it be a dream, it is a dream that appeals to the highest sentiments of patriotism, and even of our material interests. It is a dream which is calculated to stimulate and to inspire every one who cares for the future of the Anglo-Saxon people. I think, myself, that the spirit of the time is, at all events, in the direction of such a movement. How far it will carry us, no man can tell; but, believe me, upon the temper and the tone in which we approach the solution of the problems which are now coming upon us, depend the security and the maintenance of that world-wide dominion, that edifice of Imperial rule, which has been solely built up for us by those who have gone before."

He was aware, he said, that a critical moment was approaching in the history of that world-wide dominion to which no Englishman could allude without a thrill of enthusiasm and patriotism, and which had been the admiration and perhaps the envy of foreign nations. Yet it was hung together by a thread so slender that even a breath,

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it might seem, would sever it. After a brief reference to those "despairing" Statesmen who had believed that the Colonies, when they had grown strong and independent, would demand entire separation from the parent stem, he said that the time had come, the conditions had been fulfilled, yet the anticipated result had not occurred. As the possibility of Separation had become greater the desire for Separation had become less. The Colonists had begun to realise that no separate existence, "however splendid," could compare with that which they enjoyed, equally with ourselves, as co-heirs of all the traditions of the past and as joint-partakers in all the influence, resources, and power of the British Empire.

In venturing on this review and forecast of Colonial feeling, Mr Chamberlain, of course, had no idea that the sentiment of Imperial patriotism would within a few years receive a powerful, if, perhaps, a temporary impulse—not so much from our military undertakings in South Africa as from the malicious slanders with which English and Colonial soldiers were alike assailed. At any time it is probable that a similar provocation would be followed by a like response, since the British, for all its bickerings, is a clannish race, and may always be trusted to unite against outsiders. But when these words were uttered Mr Chamberlain had no such convincing evidence that the prevailing sentiment in the Colonies was one of loyal, if loose, attachment to the Mother Country. That was the subsequent and absolutely unforeseen corroboration—not the basis—of his declaration of faith. How far it was well-founded, it is impossible to say. Mr Chamberlain, no doubt, is well aware that, in every Colony, there is a strong section of opinion—it may even attain the dignity of a

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Party—which is almost avowedly Anti-English. In ordinary times it is more or less manipulated by politicians of Irish birth or descent, or by Labour Leaders bent on excluding commercial and industrial competition, and laying steady pressure on the local Ministry to thwart any policy that may appear to be inspired from London or prove advantageous to the people of Great Britain. The exponents of this acrid patriotism have to withdraw to the background when a common danger threatens, or some single cause engages, the whole British race; but, so soon as the hour of emergency has passed away, they are at work again—stealthily or noisily, as the case may be. But though their action must be understood by Mr Chamberlain, he has never taken public note of it. To refer to it except in terms of implied or expressed censure would be impossible, and for an Imperial Statesman to volunteer an opinion on the internal affairs of a Colony would be a very unwise departure from that neutrality which is both expedient and Constitutional. Now and again questions must arise—especially in connection with our foreign relations—when it may be impossible to avoid use of the Veto residing in the Governors, but it has been as much the object of Mr Chamberlain as of his less energetic predecessors to rely only in the last resort on that undesirable expedient.

Even in 1895, when the new Government had only been installed a few months in power, the survivors of the old Education League at Birmingham had shown signs of restiveness. They were uneasy about the understanding, into which the Liberal Unionist Leaders had entered, as to giving assistance to the Voluntary Schools in their competition with the Board Schools. Mr

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George Dixon had introduced a Deputation to the Duke of Devonshire as Lord President of the Council, protesting by anticipation against any scheme for giving a subvention from the Rates to any institutions that maintained doctrinal teaching. Next year (1896) the question was raised in a more acute form when the Government Bill was introduced. It is unnecessary here to describe a Measure which never passed into law or to examine the reasons for its miscarriage—especially as it was a scheme which Mr Chamberlain supported rather as part of his bargain with the Conservatives than as an expression of his personal views.

His position was, in fact, analogous, *mutatis mutandis*, to that held by Lord Salisbury in 1891 with regard to the abolition of School Fees. Each Leader in turn found himself at issue with the extreme men of his own Party. Mr Chamberlain, however, expressed no hesitating concurrence in the common policy of the Government. While he admitted that in certain respects the Government Bill might be improved — *e.g.*, he would favour the introduction of a Conscience Clause in Denominational Training Colleges, and would increase the relief proposed for necessitous Board Schools — he approved of the leading principles of the Measure. He preferred the suggested Education Authority elected on ordinary representative lines to a School Board resting on a Cumulative Franchise (invented chiefly to give Roman Catholic minorities a chance of representation). He also praised the arrangements under which each Local Authority would be enabled to adapt the teaching to the needs and tastes of the neighbour-

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hood. At the same time he admitted that he still retained his abstract preference for Universal Secular Instruction in all National Elementary Schools, though that, he pointed out, was an ideal too expensive to realise, and unattainable in the present or any probable condition of English Parties. When the Bill had to be withdrawn in July, owing to a wrecking Amendment which Mr Balfour had incautiously accepted, loud complaints were made of his management of the Measure in the House of Commons. Mr Chamberlain promptly came forward to defend him. "Nothing," he said, "could be 'more ungenerous' than to blame the Leader of the House for the faults of a system which made legislation so difficult. No Party could desire a Leader more skilful in debate, more courageous in action, more loyal to his colleagues, more courteous to his opponents, more mindful of the high and honourable traditions of the House of Commons." A similar tribute was paid by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. This, he said, should dispose of the legend that Mr Goschen, Mr Chamberlain, and himself were all burning to obtain the succession to Mr Balfour.

At the beginning of 1896 (25th January), before the echoes of the Venezuelan storm had died away, Mr Chamberlain had delivered his views on a position which might have become awkward if the Washington Government, as soon as we were brought face to face with German enmity, had not so far moderated its tone as to make it possible for us to enter into friendly negotiations. There had been misapprehension, said Mr Chamberlain, on both sides. This, no doubt, was true. But only on one side had there been rudeness and menace. Still, this was not

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a time to stand on Diplomatic punctilio. Mr Chamberlain, whose early sympathy with American institutions had been increased by his wife's connection with the most attractive and cultured circle in Boston society, was especially qualified to assume the part of mediator. On the British side, he explained, it had been thought that the Americans wished to pick a quarrel. At Washington it was believed that we meant to impugn the Monroe Doctrine. Fortunately, however, there had been time for reflection. All that was best in the United States, he said, would regard with horror a War with this country, and he was sure that President Cleveland was "incapable of the wickedness of inciting two kindred nations to strife." In point of fact, what he had done was to angle for the Democratic Vote by insulting Great Britain, but, unscrupulous as he was in domestic politics, he had never meant to bring about a Naval War for which his country was absolutely unprepared. To these facts, however, Mr Chamberlain did not refer. He confined himself to stating such truths as were inoffensive—that we had never disputed a Doctrine which was originated by a British Statesman, and that we did not covet another inch of territory on American soil.

In the House of Commons, on the Vote of Censure moved at the opening of the Session, Mr Chamberlain entered on a defence of the Government policy in Egypt—especially of the proposed Expedition up the Nile, and emphasised his separation, which he had on more than one previous occasion announced, from the diminishing band of politicians who thought that our only duty towards the Khedive was to prepare for leaving him to

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deal as best he might with his difficulties in the Soudan. Mr Chamberlain avowed his pride in the work accomplished in Egypt by British officers and administrators. But all the good they had carried out would be undone if we were to withdraw. As for the proposed advance beyond the boundary of Egypt proper, he pointed out that, though the intervening desert was a barrier against invasion, Wady Halfa was a screen for raids and incursions. The recent defeat of the Italians at Adowa had created a ferment among the Dervishes and created a new situation. In undertaking this Expedition we were acting with the cordial concurrence of Italy, and with the approval of Germany and Austria; nor was there any need to apprehend any different expression of opinion from France and Russia. The Government did not contemplate any "gigantic military enterprise"—their policy was confined to the immediate needs of Egypt.

Mr Chamberlain, like the rest of his colleagues, was not yet aware that only a still bolder policy would avail to keep Mahdism in check, and the conditional pledge which he gave as to the limited nature of the Expedition, if not accepted as altogether wise by military experts, was a faithful representation of the views of the Government. Wady Halfa was then believed to be the utmost point to which advance was reasonably practicable, nor was public opinion—either at home or abroad—yet ripe for a complete reconquest of the Soudan.

During the whole of 1896, and for many months afterwards, the time and energy of the Colonial Secretary were almost absorbed by South African affairs, but early in November he delivered

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an address at Birmingham on the text that Commerce is the greatest of political interests—a point of view which was forced upon him by his Departmental position. "All the great Offices of States," he said, "are occupied with commercial affairs. The Foreign Office and the Colonial Office are engaged in getting new markets and defending old ones. The War Office and the Admiralty are mostly occupied in preparations for the defence of those markets, and for the protection of our commerce. The Boards of Agriculture and Trade are entirely concerned with those two great branches of industry. Even the Education Department bases its claim for public money upon the necessity of keeping our people well to the front in the competition—the commercial competition—which they have to sustain; and the Home Office finds the largest scope for its activity in the protection of the life, the health, and the comfort of the vast army of manual labourers engaged in those industries." The Government, therefore, which did most to increase our trade and establish it on a firm basis was most deserving of popular approval. This test was one from which the existing Ministry need not shrink. It had endeavoured not unsuccessfully to increase and develop free markets. While the Colonial Possessions of France and Germany were but an increasing burden to the Mother Countries, the British Colonies soon became self-supporting. Such results justified the continuous extensions of our territories, and, though the pessimistic accounts of British trade would not bear examination, it was necessary for us to be watchful of our commercial interests.

Apart from the incessant controversy about South African affairs, 1897 was to Mr Chamber-

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lain an exceptionally busy year. The origin and development of Australian Confederation are sketched in another Chapter, but the ordinary work in Downing Street was largely increased by the long conferences and private conversations held with the Colonial Premiers who had come to London for the Jubilee. It was largely owing to Mr Chamberlain's insistence that the Government resolved to denounce our Commercial Treaties with Germany and Belgium, and risk the outcry that would certainly be raised by the more nervous disciples of Free Trade. They had taken alarm at the Foreign Prison-made Goods Bill, and were in the mood to charge Ministers with every kind of financial enormity. But it was with no intention of tampering with our fiscal system that the Government at last consented to free the Empire from the restraints imposed on the legislative and commercial independence of the Colonies. Some of these had plainly refused to submit any longer to limitations imposed without their consent being obtained or asked. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Dominion Premier, had pressed the Canadian demand with unusual vigour. The Colonies at this time were so much in favour with Englishmen, and Germany had fallen into such bad odour, that a policy on which no Ministry would have ventured four or five years before was accepted in Parliament with little more than formal protest, leading to an interesting if almost abstract discussion.

The Voluntary Schools Act passed in 1897, was a temporary expedient rendered necessary by the abandonment of the more comprehensive Measure proposed in 1896, and was only brought forward as part of a still more general scheme of Educational Reform to which Ministers were

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pledged. It provided for the payment from Imperial funds of a Grant-in-Aid not exceeding a sum that would work out at 5s. a head for every child attending the Voluntary Schools. Large discretionary powers in the distribution of this Grant were left to the Education Department, and by recognising the principle of Association among neighbouring schools it was rendered possible to proportion the assistance given to the special needs of a locality. The scheme was one about which Mr Chamberlain affected no enthusiasm, though he supported it as part of his arrangement with the Conservatives. As a set-off they agreed to the Necessitous Board Schools Bill, which authorised relief on a scale that Ministers believed to be sufficient, while the Opposition, of course, complained that Church institutions had been unduly favoured. The whole arrangement being avowedly temporary, not much interest was felt in the Parliamentary discussion.

Keener excitement was provoked by the Workmen's Compensation Bill, which did not become law without strong opposition from a section of the Conservative Party—led by Lord Londonderry. As an ex-Minister who had not been offered a sufficiently dignified office in the new Cabinet, and as a generous employer of labour who resented legal interference between himself and his men, he considered himself entitled to resist a Measure which was known to be inspired by the Radical members of the Unionist Government. Though it was piloted through the House of Commons by the Conservative Home Secretary (Sir Matthew White Ridley) it had been practically drafted, and throughout its course was vigilantly watched, by Mr Chamberlain. With certain important exceptions—agricultural

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labourers, seamen, domestic servants, and persons employed in workshops where no machinery was in use—it provided the working classes as a whole with what was hoped would be a cheap and easy means of compensation in case of all accidents suffered in the course of their employment. In case of death the sum payable to a workman's representatives would be, according to his rate of wages, between £150 and £300: in case of disablement, a weekly allowance not exceeding half his weekly earnings or more than 20s. If the amount could not be settled by agreement reference was to be made to arbitration. "Contracting out" was permitted, if the Registrar of Friendly Societies should certify that the workman was entitled to receive under a voluntary arrangement benefits not less than those offered by the Act. In refusing to extend the Measure to seamen, Mr Chamberlain explained that provision must be made for them under a future Act, but he refused to except miners from the present one. The most important Amendments to which he consented were (1) that where the voluntary fund had proved insufficient the injured person might claim for the balance under the Act; and (2) that when the weekly allowance had been paid for more than twelve months either party should be entitled to have the total liability commuted in a lump sum. In nearly every instance, the Government proposals were carried by large majorities in the House of Commons, and the slight Amendments introduced by the Peers were, Mr Chamberlain said, not of such a character as to diminish the benefits offered to the working classes.

In one respect the working of the Act has somewhat disappointed its authors. The contentious disposition of some employers on the one hand,

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and of certain Trade Union Leaders on the other, assisted by the perversely conscientious ingenuity of the lawyers, has subsequently thrown an element of doubt and obscurity over an Act which to the lay mind had been perfectly clear and consistent. It has, therefore, given rise to a certain amount of expensive litigation. But by sweeping away the legal technicalities which had gathered round the doctrines of "Common Employment," and the various forms of "Negligence," as well as by promoting the private settlement of disputes, and by encouraging the operation of voluntary institutions such as that maintained on the London and North-Western Railway, and in Lord Dudley's collieries, the Act is universally admitted to have given more practical assistance to the working men than any previous legislation as to the Liability of Employers.

One thing, of course, it has not accomplished. Radical critics complained that it placed no direct pressure on a careless employer to observe such precautions as would reduce the risks of employment and prevent many so-called accidents. He would take out a general policy with an Insurance Society, and it would be no concern of his how much money, not his own, he had to pay to his workpeople. The answer is that an employer who had acquired a bad name in this respect would not find a Company to accept his insurance except at a greatly enhanced rate—if at all. This consideration would operate on the mind of the most callous employer; but to get rid altogether of the danger—not, indeed, quite imaginary—is practically impossible. If the law were to forbid insurance against an employer's liability the result in many cases would be that the work-

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man would have no remedy. Unless the employer were a very substantial man a bad accident in his mine or factory might bring him to bankruptcy, and the preferential claims of his workpeople would be worth little or nothing.

Although Lord Londonderry had not resisted the Second Reading in the Upper House, but confined himself to moving Amendments (most of which were rejected), he did not pretend to accept the principle of the Measure. He went so far as to offer his resignation of the chairmanship of the Northern Union of Conservative Associations, on the ground that the Act had been passed through "the dominating will of the Colonial Secretary, whose radical views on Home politics we have always regarded with disapproval, however much we may admire him as an Imperialist." The fact that Lord Londonderry has since accepted office in the same Administration as Mr Chamberlain—first as Postmaster-General, and afterwards as Minister of Education—shows that the types of Conservatism and Social Radicalism which they respectively represent have been found, on trial, to be separated by no fundamental incompatibility of temper.

On 3rd November Mr Chamberlain, who had been elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University on a "strict Party vote," delivered an Address on Patriotism. Having pointed out that the word "patriot" was not to be found in Shakespeare, he went on to quote Bolingbroke's use of the term. The object of a "patriot prince" was, he said, to "give ease and encouragement to manufactories at home, to assist and protect trade abroad, to improve and keep in heart the national Colonies like so many farms of the Mother Country"—a strangely modern view, except for the theory

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of Imperial exploitation implied in the last metaphor.

This exercise in abstract rhetoric—a form of composition to which Mr Chamberlain had devoted little attention since his Debating Society days—was also notable for the admission that his political outlook had been considerably modified by changing times and altered circumstances, but he asked his audience of young enthusiasts to believe that through all vicissitudes he had always sought—it might be with faltering steps and by mistaken roads—the greatness of the Empire and the welfare of the people at large. A vague attachment to the whole human race was, he said, a poor substitute for the performance of the duties of a citizen. Professions of universal philanthrophy afforded no excuse for neglecting the interests of one's own country. He believed that our special mission in the world was to colonise and civilise. It was untrue that we had not the strength to sustain the burden of Empire—that the "weary Titan was staggering under the too vast orb of his fate."

"We do not lack efficient instruments for our great purpose, and we can still count on the energy and devotion of our countrymen, and on their ability to win the confidence and respect of the people they are sent to govern for their good. On the bleak mountains of the Indian frontier, amidst the sands of the Soudan, in the swamps and forests of Western Africa — wherever the British flag floats—Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Irishmen are to-day fronting every danger and enduring every hardship—living as brave men and dying as heroes, in the faithful performance of duty and the passionate love of their country.

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They ask from us that their sacrifices shall not be in vain.

"If such is still the spirit of our people why should we shrink from our task, or allow the sceptre of Empire to fall from our hands—

'Thro' craven fears of being great?'

"I have faith in our race and our nation. I believe that, with all the force and enthusiasm of which Democracy alone is capable, they will complete and maintain that splendid edifice of our greatness, which, commenced under aristocratic auspices, has received in these later times its greatest extension; and that the fixity of purpose and strength of will which are necessary to this end will be supplied by that National Patriotism which sustains the most strenuous efforts and makes possible the greatest sacrifices."

This elevated appeal may be contrasted with the speech made before the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce in which he had explained that the chief function of Statesmanship was to develop Trade. To die for one's country and to push one's business—this was the double mission of the patriot. A truly British combination of duties, which gave our French critics much good-humoured amusement.

A change from these amiable generalities was afforded by a sharp encounter between Mr Chamberlain and Sir William Harcourt — the two Statesmen were never more happy than when girding at each other. A succession of favourable by-elections (Middleton, Liverpool, and Deptford) had put heart into the Liberals. Mr Chamberlain had professed to feel no surprise. The successes of the Unionists at the General

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Election had been due not so much to their own merits as to the faults and defects of the other side. It was, he pleasantly remarked, largely a "penal operation." Having been punished, it was only likely that "the criminals" would be again taken into favour by some of those who had assisted at "the execution." The metaphors were resented by Sir William, who declared, in a letter written for publication, that Mr Chamberlain was what was called at cards a "bad loser." "When the odd trick as well as the honours were marked against him he lost his temper as well as the game." Quoting Mr Chamberlain's words, Sir William exclaimed, "what an agreeable and graceful style of political criticism! Its venom is that of a serpent gnawing the file. Did he not discern the 'boomerang' character of this effusion of bile? The old game of dishing the Whigs had broken down, and Mr Chamberlain bade fair to become a Disraeli *manqué*. He had tempted the Tories to sell their souls for votes. They had not got their votes, and their souls were lost. Mr Chamberlain perishing by his own virtue was a spectacle for men and angels! How sharper than a serpent's tooth it was to have a thankless Democracy, the last refuge of Patriotism!"

Mr Chamberlain retorted by calling attention to the profusion of mixed metaphors in which Sir William had indulged. What exquisite humour to say that he had tempted the Tories to sell their souls for votes! What delicate innuendo! What sweet reasonableness! It was said that Sir William, at "one time in his varied career," had considered Mr Disraeli a model to be imitated. Mr Chamberlain preferred to compare him to the Statesman of whom Mr Lecky had written: "Lord Thurlow, though he had a strong natural

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bias towards harsh and despotic measures, seems to have taken his politics much as he took his briefs, and he had that air of cynical, brutal, and almost reckless candour which is sometimes the best veil of a time-serving and highly-calculating nature."

The passage in the Queen's Speech in which Mr Chamberlain had most concern (8th Feb. 1899) again called attention to the distress caused in the West Indies by the fall in the price of sugar; expressed a hope that the artificial causes of that distress might be modified by the negotiations proceeding for a general conference with the Bounty-giving Governments; but announced that before such relief could become effectual it would be necessary to vote a subsidy to the struggling Colonies so that they might tide over the crisis. This proposal had been foreshadowed by the Colonial Secretary in a speech at Liverpool. On this occasion, he explained that the Imperialism in which he believed aimed less at acquiring new territory than at preserving free markets, though he expressed his approval of Lord Rosebery's picturesque phrase that it was our duty to "peg out claims for posterity." It was a matter of course, that the West Indian policy which Mr Chamberlain announced should be attacked by economic thinkers like Mr John Morley, who declared that this subvention to the Sugar Colonies was very like a Bounty though "wrapped up in paper of a different colour and bearing a different label."

In the domestic legislation of the year Mr Chamberlain was believed to have had more than a hand in the Bills for Irish Local Government and for creating Municipal Boroughs in the County of London. Both were in absolute

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harmony with his own life-long belief in Decentralised Self-Government, but, while the former was almost forced upon the Conservatives of the rank and file, they adopted the latter with alacrity. The system now established in Ireland differed from that existing in England and Scotland, in that no Parish Councils were set up. The local administration was given over to County Councils, District Councils (Urban or Rural), and Boards of Guardians—the franchise adopted being the Parliamentary one except that Peers and women ratepayers were not excluded. To the County Councils were given the financial and administrative powers hitherto exercised by Grand Juries and by County Presentment Sessions, and the levying of such Poor Rate as did not fall within the Urban County District. The question of compensation for malicious injuries was, however, left for the County Courts — with appeal to the Judge of Assize. The Rural District Councils acquired the powers of the Baronial Presentment Sessions and the Rural Sanitary Authorities, but on various heads of expenditure a veto could be laid by the County Council, and in certain cases an alternate appeal lies to the Local Government Board. The Urban District Councils became the road authorities and were to levy all the rates.

Such were some of the privileges which the Unionist Government entrusted to the elected representatives of a country in which two-thirds of the population were more or less disaffected to the "English connection." In spite of the administrative limitations and financial safeguards imposed, the Act has, no doubt, taken away most of the authority that still remained to the Loyalist and landlord class, and it should be no matter for

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wonder that it was disliked by many of those who were compelled by Party ties to give it their support. Yet it is difficult to see how the Conservatives any more than the Radical Unionists could further postpone a Measure to the principle of which they were so deeply committed. One of the favourite arguments against Home Rule had been that except in the matter of Local Government the Irishman stood at no political disadvantage as compared with the Englishman or Scotchman, and this remaining inequality the Unionists had proved, by their abortive Bill in 1892, that they intended to remove.

The London Bill, though the creation of a number of Municipalities to which important powers were reserved was not intended to curtail the existing authority of the County Council, awakened such keen hostility, even before the text had been seen, that Mr Balfour had to announce in June that the scheme would be postponed to another Session.

Though Mr Chamberlain, in 1898, made frequent appearances in Parliament, and took an active part in the discussions, especially on South African policy, his most important and characteristic utterances were delivered out of doors. The speech which he made at Birmingham on 13th May, was, in its form, somewhat embarrassing to the Government. Since the days of the Crimean War, he said, Great Britain had maintained a policy of isolation. This had been all very well so long as each of the Great Powers worked only for its own hand. Now, however, a new situation had arisen. The Great Powers had made alliances, and, so long as we remained outside these alliances, we were liable to be attacked by an overwhelming combination.

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Obviously, it was our first duty to consolidate the internal strength of the Empire. Our next duty was to establish and maintain bonds of unity with our kinsmen across the Atlantic. Even war might be worth the sacrifice if the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack were to wave together over an Anglo-American alliance on behalf of some great and noble cause! When he turned to the position of affairs in China, he remarked that it had been foreseen that Russia would, before long, extend her dominion to the South, so as to obtain a port and harbour free from ice. This is what had happened. Russia had taken Port Arthur and Talienwan. Then followed a passage which startled the Diplomatic world. "As to the methods in which Russia secured that occupation, as to the representations which were made, and repudiated as soon as they were, as to the representations which were given, and broken a fortnight afterwards, I had better say 'Who sups with the Devil must have a long spoon.'"

If the phrase was extemporised the argument had been carefully elaborated. The casual expression harmonised with the whole context. Once again Mr Chamberlain dwelt on the dangers of our policy of isolation. If it were to be persisted in, the future of China, he said, would be settled without consulting us or considering our interests. If, on the other hand, we intended to enforce the policy of the Open Door, we must not allow the Jingoes to drive us into a quarrel with all the world at once. We must not reject the idea of alliance with those Powers whose interest most nearly coincided with our own.

It was only natural that the Liberals should ask for an explanation of this remarkable utterance,

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and, in the Upper House, Lord Kimberley put a Question to the Prime Minister which he associated with the Birmingham utterance. Lord Salisbury, however, refused to be drawn. He could not discuss his colleague's speech—not having the text in his hand! Passing away from a topic which, by his silence, he admitted to be somewhat delicate, he explained the action of the Government in taking possession of Wei-hai-wei. On the attack being renewed in the Lower House, Mr Chamberlain made a vigorous reply. To the Radicals, exulting in his having been thrown over, they said, by his Chief and his colleagues, he pointed out that the sufficient answer was that he had not resigned! If a Cabinet Minister differed from the Prime Minister on a broad question of policy he was bound to retire — though it was absurd to suppose that every member of a Cabinet was responsible for every word and every phrase used by another member. What he had meant was that if this country insisted on remaining isolated it must take the consequences. He did not advise alliances or seek for them, but he did say, for himself, that he earnestly desired close, cordial, and intimate relations with the United States.

In the future it is possible that Mr Chamberlain's sanguine utterance may be justified, but when it was published it did, no doubt, do something to defeat the very object at which he was aiming. Even the politicians who are best affected to us at Washington are shy of giving offence to the Irish, whose influence is quite out of proportion to their number—any political candidate who is reasonably suspected of British leanings, having a black mark made against him by the Party managers. Nor is this anti-English sentiment

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confined to Americans of Irish birth or extraction. It is equally strong among the farmers of the Western and Southern States. This is a fact of which Mr Chamberlain must have been well aware, though his personal impressions of American thought and feeling are chiefly drawn from the East. This, though it typifies what is most effective and progressive in the life of America, no more represents the collective sentiment of the Union than London or Oxford and Cambridge reflect the opinions of the British electorate. No special harm has been done by Mr Chamberlain's defiance of Russia, whose unfriendly action had already stopped short of actual war. But the premature bid for an American alliance had for the time damaged rather than improved the Diplomatic relations between the two Anglo-Saxon peoples.

At the Mansion-house on 9th November, and in a series of speeches delivered a few days later at Manchester, Mr Chamberlain, without retiring from the position he had taken up earlier in the year, showed more of the restraint advisable in dealing with Foreign Affairs. He scrupulously avoided any air of triumph in his reference to the dramatic incident which had been so wounding to French pride. "Fashoda," he said, was "but a symbol." The great issue was the control of the whole Valley of the Nile. On that question there could be no compromise—it was for Egypt a question of life or death. His references to the Convention recently concluded with France as to our West African Colonies and Spheres of Influence, were studiously moderate, and he avoided any suggestion that we had made an advantageous bargain, though as a matter of fact he was fairly well satisfied with the result of the negotiations

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conducted by the Foreign Office. He was on more treacherous ground when he entered on a general defence of the Government's dealings with Chinese affairs. Their guiding policy, he said, had been to do nothing to assist in breaking up that ancient Empire, to guarantee our naval position, and to maintain an Open Door for the commerce of all nations. The difficulty was to prevent its being slammed in our face. As to making an agreement with Russia, we had made agreements before! An agreement might not be impossible, and certainly it would be desirable. But the main effect of an agreement was to explain the objects and intentions of the parties. It would not be permanently valid—such was the teaching of experience—unless it were for the interest of both parties to maintain it, or one of them were strong enough to enforce it.

The political cynicism of this avowal was quite alien to Mr Chamberlain's character. It expressed the disgusted acquiescence of a man of business on discovering that the code of honour which prevails amongst ordinary tradesmen is too exalted for International politics. He could understand that the other party to a bargain would try to get the best of it, and might employ underhand tricks to effect that object—all this would be regarded, more or less, as part of the game. But that a promise once given should be broken without any shadow of excuse, repudiated almost as soon as it had been offered, was, perhaps, something of a revelation to Mr Chamberlain. His previous dealings, in commerce as in politics, had been with men who professed at least that their word was as good as their bond, and if they acted shabbily would have the grace to be ashamed of it. His

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anger at the Russian Chancellor's breach of faith —which an experienced Diplomatist would have noted in a bland Memorandum—had led to the outburst on which Lord Salisbury preferred not to offer any comment. But it had given way to a somewhat exaggerated sense of disillusionment.

It was unfortunate that the milder mood displayed at Manchester did not last many months. The indignant rebuke which he had administered to the Russian Government in October 1898, was followed in November 1899, by an expression which, quite unfairly though not unplausibly, was represented as an affront to the French people. For the actual words used there was, indeed, even more moral justification than for the attack on Russian bad faith. The Colonial Secretary's temper, meantime, had been sorely tried by the shufflings and procrastinations of the Transvaal Government. He had been working day and night to arrange a pacific settlement of the various disputes between the British and the Boers, and, almost to the end, he was hopeful that Mr Krüger would consent to make the reasonable concessions demanded in London. All the time he believed—not without reason—that his efforts were being frustrated through the encouragement given to Mr Krüger by the anti-English Press on the Continent, and especially in France. In point of spite and scurrility, there was not, perhaps, much to choose amongst the libellous products of the various Capitals, but for sheer filthiness a certain French caricaturist easily took the palm. This cartoon so far succeeded in its purpose that it irritated every Englishman who saw it, and Mr Chamberlain was but expressing the general feeling of his countrymen when, in a speech delivered at

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Leicester, he advised Frenchmen to "mend their manners."

It is true that the rebuke was intended merely for the Parisian Press, but it was taken as of general application, and raised no little indignation amongst a people who, before everything, pride themselves on their politeness. They were still smarting under the Fashoda incident, and this added grievance produced for some weeks a state of feeling that might have endangered the relations between the two countries, but for the studiously correct attitude of their Governments. The display of ill-will was naturally taken by the Boers to indicate that if they pushed their dispute with Great Britain to an extreme they might count on the intervention of France with certainty, and probably also on that of Russia. This, at least, was the tale told to Mr Krüger by his Hollander agents in Europe.

But the ebullition of enmity in France—which was but a passing mood—was not the worst result of Mr Chamberlain's speech. It happened that the German Emperor had just paid a visit to Queen Victoria—for no other purpose, it was believed, than to make it known that he felt no sympathy with the malevolence towards England exhibited by the Berlin Press. He held a long and friendly conversation with the Colonial Secretary, and, in that hearty downright manner which is the best screen for Diplomatic craft, he conveyed a general impression of personal friendliness towards this country, and dispelled the idea that Germany entertained sinister or aggressive designs in South Africa. His assurances may have been perfectly sincere as to the intentions in his own mind, nor would so shrewd a man as Mr Chamberlain have been deceived

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by sham professions of good-will towards Great Britain. But it is a not uncommon mistake with Englishmen to believe that so autocratic and able a Ruler as William II. is omnipotent in his own country. Relying on the cordial attitude of the Kaiser, Mr Chamberlain (at Leicester, 30th November 1899) made an overture of something more than friendship to the German nation. The main character of the Teutonic race differed, he said, very slightly from that of the Anglo-Saxon race. The same sentiments that brought us into close sympathy with the United States might also bring us into closer "sympathy and alliance" with Germany. If the "union between England and America" was a powerful factor in the cause of Peace, a new "Triple Alliance between the Teutonic and the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race" would be "a still more potent influence in the future of the world." It is true that Mr Chamberlain qualified these remarks by explaining that he did not contemplate any written instrument. Indeed, an "understanding" might be better than "an alliance, which might stereotype arrangements that could not be accepted as permanent in view of the changing circumstances from day to day."

The annoyance caused by this speech in France was exceeded by the contemptuous indignation expressed in Germany. Not only irresponsible newspapers but Ministers themselves repudiated the interpretation which, somewhat unfairly, had been placed on the optimistic language of the Colonial Secretary. In the United States the disclaimer, if less offensive, was equally distinct. Though the solidarity of "Anglo-Saxon feeling" had, no doubt, been increased by the recent action of Great

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Britain in refusing to support, and threatening to resist, the attempted European intervention between the United States and Spain—though it was generally felt that, at a real pinch, England and America might each rely on the other for help — the memory of a Democracy is short and its gratitude not long-enduring. Any talk of alliance—so alien to American traditions — was alarming to steady-going politicians, while it gave a fresh opening to the anti-British party. It was even considered necessary for the President to incorporate, in his Message to Congress (5th December), a statement that his Government would remain faithful to the precept of avoiding "entangling alliances," while in the "unfortunate contest in South Africa" it would remain neutral.

The legislation of the year (1899) was chiefly important from the fact that the Government were enabled to redeem the pledge given in the previous Session for establishing Municipal Boroughs in London. The Bill was officially resisted by the Opposition, but it was found to be so moderate in its provisions that no excuse was provided for representing it as an attack on the County Council, though the magnitude and richness of the area assigned to the Corporation of the City of Westminster created certain apprehensions, which, however, have not yet been justified. Another Bill in which Mr Chamberlain was so much interested that he was placed in charge of it was to enable the occupiers of small houses to become owners of them. The limit of value was fixed at £300, and the amount which the Local Authority was empowered to advance at £240. Those who had least faith in the advantages of the Bill could raise no objec-

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tions to its principle—it only offered to artisans throughout the kingdom the same privileges as were enjoyed by Irish farmers, and while compulsion was to be exercised by the Local Authority on an unwilling vendor. Obviously, it was not a Measure which any member of Parliament with an eye to his constituents would venture to oppose. An Amendment, proposed by a Radical member, to vest the freehold of houses thus acquired in the Local Authority, not in the purchasing occupier, was defeated by 249 votes against 62, and the subsequent course of the Measure was practically unopposed.

The incorporation of the territories hitherto governed by the Royal Niger Company within the British Dominion is described in another Chapter. It is sufficient to mention that in regard to this transaction certain personal and absolutely unfounded imputations were made on the Colonial Secretary. More embarrassing, because it was supported by opponents who felt no personal animus against him, was the charge that he had failed to execute his pledges with regard to Old Age Pensions. Though politicians on both sides of the House had given inconsiderate promises under this head, there could be no doubt that the expectation of something practical being done rested chiefly on Mr Chamberlain. It was necessary to show that at least the intention had been sincere. On 24th April one of the Government Whips moved the appointment of a Select Committee to report on the whole question of providing for the Aged and Deserving Poor. Mr Asquith seized the occasion to taunt Mr Chamberlain with his unredeemed pledge, and, on his explaining that he had only invited dis-

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cussion, and made a proposal purely on his own account, wittily retorted that the proposal was good enough to found an action for breach of promise on! Before the Report of this Committee, over which Mr Henry Chaplin presided, could be issued, the taunts to which Mr Chamberlain was exposed led him to offer an explicit defence of his position.*

On 24th May, in reply to a Deputation from the Oddfellows' Conference then sitting at Birmingham, he stated that he would not support any general scheme for giving weekly pensions (say 5s. a week) to every man or woman over sixty years of age. It would cost £34,000,000 a year. But even if such a sum could be raised by taxation the result would be mischievous. A gigantic scheme of Outdoor Relief for everybody would discourage thrift and encourage idleness and vice. There must be some test, and the test which he had always advocated was that the pensioner should have contributed through his working life to some Friendly Society. "Rome," he said, "was not built in a day: We shall not get Old Age Pensions in a week." But he had always believed, and still believed, that the principle was right, and might be so worked out as to contribute to thrift and not to discourage it. He even expressed a hope that before the end of the present Parliament "something considerable might be done in the direction of which he had spoken."

The report of Mr Chaplin's Committee presented at the close of the Session concluded with the following recommendations:—

"(1) That a Pension Authority should be established in each Union of the country, to

* Further reference to this subject will be made in the last Chapter.

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receive and to determine applications for pensions; (2) That the authority for this purpose should be a Committee of not less than six or more than twelve members appointed by the Guardians from their own number in the first instance; (3) That the Committee, when so appointed, should be independent of the Board of Guardians, and that other members should be added to it, subject to regulations to be made by the Local Government Board, and that it is desirable that other public bodies within the area should be represented on the Committee, and that a majority of the Committee shall be members of the Board of Guardians; (4) That the cost of the pensions should be borne by the common fund of the Union, and that a contribution, from Imperial sources, should be made to that fund in aid of the general cost of the Poor Law administration, such contribution to be allocated, not in proportion to the amount distributed in each Union in respect of pensions, but on the basis of population, not to exceed one-half of the estimated cost of the pensions; (5) That the amount of the pensions in each district should be fixed at not less than 5s. or more than 7s. a week, at the discretion of the Committee, according to the cost of living in the locality, and that it should be paid through the medium of the Post Office; (6) That the pension should be awarded for a period of not less than three years, to be renewed at the end of that period, but subject to withdrawal at any time by the Pension Authority, if in their opinion the circumstances should demand it. In order to facilitate the inquiries of the Pension Authority, and to prevent as far as possible attempts at fraudulent misrepresentation, we think that applications for a pension

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should be made on a prescribed form, and should be signed before a Justice of the Peace on oath, without fee. The machinery which we propose for the administration of a pension scheme in England and Wales may not, in some respects, be possible or equally suitable for Ireland and Scotland, and our recommendations are subject to such modifications as to machinery as may be necessary or desirable in the case of either of these countries."

Finally, the Committee considered the main objections which have been put forward against the above and similar pension proposals, and said:—"We are very sensible of the grave importance of the inquiry which has been committed to our care, and of the difficulties of the problem which it has been our duty to examine. We have given to the subject, within the time at our disposal, the best attention in our power, and we make our proposals with the deference which is due to the opinions of others on a difficult and highly complicated question. But we believe that if they are adopted they will add to the comfort and improve the position, of the aged and deserving poor."

Throughout the War period the hostility shown to Mr Chamberlain proceeded less from the regular Chiefs of the Opposition than from a small group of Radicals who represented the antiquated doctrines of the Non-intervention and Peace-at-any-price School, who honestly believed that Great Britain had all along been in the wrong, but whose convictions on this point were obviously strengthened by their personal dislike of the Statesman whom they considered a renegade. When the new Session opened (30th January 1900), the chief Amendment to the Address

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was moved in the House of Commons by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, and expressed a general censure on the policy on the Government both in their conduct of the South African War and in their defective preparations for it. In his reply Mr Chamberlain assumed the tone of a Statesman speaking rather for the whole country than for any Party, and, except for a few flings at Sir William Harcourt, was careful to avoid any semblance of aggression. After defending the policy which had preceded the War, he admitted that Ministers must expect to be criticised for any mistakes made and any checks encountered. At the proper time blame should be apportioned among those responsible, but the important thing at present was to retrieve such errors as had been committed.

Speaking while the memory of the "black week" in December 1899, was still fresh in men's minds, he declared that the spirit of the nation was unbroken, and that the country would shrink from no sacrifice demanded by the Government. He ridiculed the exultant declaration of certain foreign critics that the British Empire was bleeding to death and our *prestige* lost. Against the defects which had been disclosed in our military system must be set the pride we felt in the gallant deeds performed by our troops from this country and the Colonies. There must be no second Majuba—never again should a citadel and centre of disaffection and race animosity be raised in South Africa. Never again should the Boers be allowed to threaten our supremacy or treat an Englishman as if he belonged to an inferior race. It was not true that gloom had settled down on the nation; the assistance given by the Colonies was a fact the importance of which could not be

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exaggerated. Never before had the Empire so fully realised its strength and unity. In this Federation of Race we found compensation for the evils of War!

From the tactical point of view, it was, undoubtedly, convenient to divert the attention of the House from the management of the War to the position of the country, and Mr Chamberlain took full advantage of the latitude allowed by a Debate on the Address. But the resolute and cheerful air with which his words were spoken was the more useful since evidently it had not been assumed for Parliamentary purposes. Deeply involved as his reputation was in the fortunes of the War, discredited as he would have been if his "forward" policy in South Africa had resulted in an ignominious withdrawal, he was never tempted to exaggerate the magnitude of the "crisis"—he looked steadily at the facts and saw them in their real proportions. In this respect he faithfully interpreted and reproduced the feeling of the nation as a whole. The public gloom and despondency — of which so much was heard at the Clubs and the tea tables—never touched the English people. It was highly discreditable that so many public speakers and writers for the Press did their best to create a panic by suggesting that it had already set in. Looking back at the behaviour of our countrymen at the end of 1899 and the beginning of 1900, we are able now to realise that the great multitude of them went about their daily business just as if nothing particular were happening in South Africa. They were happily unconscious that the nation was passing through a "period of trial"—that we were "struggling for honour, nay, for our very Imperial existence."

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On the contrary, the ordinary Englishman regarded the War chiefly as the source of rather more exciting news than usual—it was specially interesting if he happened to have kinsmen or personal friends at the front. In fact he exhibited the same "British phlegm" and stolid fortitude which had carried his ancestors through life-and-death conflicts with nations as great as his own. We were "saved" from a "national peril," not because "our youth leapt to arms" or because "our sons over-sea" sailed across to rescue us, but because, as a people, we knew very well that we should win in the end, that somehow we should "muddle through," and that, meantime, we were in no kind of danger. The only contingency that might have been formidable would have been the armed intervention of one or more of the Great Powers. But it very soon became apparent that, however sincere they might be in their expressions of malevolence, there was no combination of them that cared to start business by trying issues with the British Navy. That being so, the only question for this country was how many millions of money it was prepared to spend, and how many lives it would risk, for a task which had proved to be even more formidable than the least sanguine of the experts had predicted.

For bringing the "crisis" to its proper bearings, Mr Chamberlain deserved more gratitude than he has ever received. His reasoned optimism was the more effective because he always "had the ear of the public." It produced a better immediate result than the cool *insouciance* of Mr Balfour or the *mitis sapientia* of the Prime Minister. They were solemnly lectured because they preached the equanimity which they practised,

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whereas the more rhetorical, though equally sane, exhortations delivered by Mr Chamberlain gave much comfort to a number of nervous persons who had set up as leaders of public opinion.

The short list of Measures promised in the Queen's Speech was too long for a Session which was almost entirely spent on matters relating to or arising from the War. The Bill for regulating Secondary and Technical Education in England and Wales only reached a Second Reading in the Upper House, and the substantive legislation consisted mainly of the Australian Commonwealth Act and certain minor Statutes relating to Tenants' Right in Great Britain, Limited Liability Companies, and Railway Accidents.

On 11th May Mr Chamberlain once more took occasion to insist on the political importance of the Liberal Unionist Party, and incidentally remarked that he could see little difference between that and the Liberal Imperialist Party (recently founded by Lord Rosebery), except that they had separate Leaders. But his speech was not meant or interpreted as holding out any overtures for reunion. Its purpose was rather to expose the illogical position of a group of politicians who maintained a distinction which, it was argued, rested on no difference of principles. On the other hand, certain political gossips, hearing that Mr Chamberlain's relations in the Cabinet with a leading Conservative colleague were not altogether harmonious, had busily put it about that a split was likely to occur in the Unionist Administration. The rumour was so persistent that the Party Managers thought proper to get up a public demonstration of amity. Mr Balfour was invited to a Banquet (16th May) by the Liberal Unionist

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Club, at which the Colonial Secretary paid a graceful compliment to the personal qualities and political loyalty of the First Lord of the Treasury. Mr Balfour, in reply, declared that any differences which had asserted themselves between the two Parties during their fourteen years of co-operation had run across both sections of the alliance, and had caused no gulf between the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists. It was said that their alliance had finally "destroyed any disintegrating influence in the future." But while there were eighty votes in the House of Commons going a-begging, so long as Home Rule was not abandoned by the Liberal Party, so long would it be necessary to maintain the present Coalition. It showed, indeed, every sign of having acquired a permanent character, and might develop into an organisation fruitful of great results in the future.

These demonstrations, and others of the same kind, pointed to the sufficiently open secret that, unless something quite unexpected were to happen, this was to be the last Session of the existing Parliament. As to the policy of appealing to the country before the War had been brought to an end there was some division of opinion among the Unionists, but as a body they were inclined to favour Mr Chamberlain's view that no time could be better than the present. The end of active operations had not yet been reached, but it was universally believed to be almost within sight. What could be more correct than for the Government which had carried out the Annexation of the Boer Republics to ask the country for a Mandate as to the settlement of the new Provinces? On the other hand, the Liberals, who had recently been demanding the

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Dissolution of Parliament, began to complain, when that step was imminent, that Ministers were playing for a Khaki Election, and hoped thus to obtain a majority which they might afterwards use in furtherance of their domestic policy. The unconcealed reluctance of the Radicals to go to the polls may have been the determining factor in Lord Salisbury's mind. An interesting though almost barren Session was wound up on 8th August, and on 18th September the Dissolution was announced.

Meantime, Mr Chamberlain had prepared a bomb shell for the Radical group who had so bitterly attacked his South African policy. Among the Papers discovered at Pretoria and Bloemfontein were a number of letters from Sir Henry de Villiers and other important persons in Cape Colony, which proved how stubbornly Mr Krüger had defied the advice given him by the best representatives of Afrikander opinion, and which went a long way to show that the offers repeatedly made by Mr Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner were such as the President might and should have accepted. But it was not, one may fairly assume, only or mainly for the purpose of justifying the Government policy in South Africa on Afrikander testimony that Mr Chamberlain caused this Correspondence to be published, almost on the eve of the General Election. The letters written by three Radical members of the Imperial Parliament made it clear that up to the time when War was in sight two of them had been on intimate terms with agents of the Pretoria Government — one advising them how to evade the demands of the Colonial Secretary without proceeding to hostilities, and the other recommending the best manner for

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commencing military operations. The other Radical implicated in these documents had only asked to be supplied, after the War had begun, with a series of statements establishing the alleged inhumanity of British soldiers and officials.

As the avowed object of one at least of the writers was to "give Joe a fall," it was but natural that the object of this amiable intrigue should retaliate with the weapon thus opportunely placed in his hand. They had shown him no quarter. Why should he spare them? Moreover it was important that the country should be informed, on documentary evidence, what exactly had been the course followed by a certain small section of the Radical Party. No doubt, the exposure of these tactics was highly convenient to the Unionists; but to refrain, on that ground, from performing a political duty would have been an excess of political self-sacrifice to which Mr Chamberlain never made pretences. It was by the choice of the Radicals themselves that what was conveniently, if not quite fairly, called the pro-Boer policy had been made to turn on a personal indictment of himself. He had never sought to separate his own action from that of his colleagues in the Cabinet; indeed, he had always sheltered himself, as was his right, under their collective responsibility, and claimed for them, as was his duty, a share in the credit for his success. Since his assailants insisted on raising a personal issue, what wonder that he should carry the war into their country, and deliver his assault just at the moment most advantageous to the Government?

If Ministers were tactically wrong in challenging the opinion of the country while the War

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was still in progress, the blame must largely lie with Mr Chamberlain who strongly advised that course. It was, as we know, justified by the immediate results. But it has since been open for the defeated Party to say that this "Khaki Election" did not represent the real opinion of the country, and that the "Mandate" then given to Ministers only applied to South African affairs. The doctrine implied has been repudiated by some of their own Leaders. Certainly the electors knew, when they cast their votes, that they were supporting a Ministry which might conceivably hold office for seven years, nor could they imagine that the principles of the South African settlement would occupy Parliament for the whole of that period. They were quite aware of the general policy, domestic and foreign, of the Party which was appealing for their verdict, and, if they had felt distrust, they should not have expressed confidence.

It cannot be denied, however, that it would have been wiser to defer the Dissolution if it had been possible to estimate the date at which Peace would be concluded. But, as things turned out, if Ministers had held on till the War was brought to an end, they would certainly have been accused of shrinking from the popular judgment and prolonging their tenure of office beyond the usual term. Between the two courses — equally Constitutional — there was nothing very decisive to turn the scale. Ministers may well have thought that the paramount consideration was that, when the time should come for settling terms with the enemy, the negotiations should be conducted by a Government armed with full authority. It was well known that the Boer Leaders were spinning out the campaign

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with guerrilla operations simply in the hope that the War might thus be made to outlast the life of the existing Parliament. Rightly or wrongly, they believed—were led by their correspondents on the Continent to believe—that the Liberals would grant far more favourable terms than could be expected while Mr Chamberlain was Colonial Secretary. They also believed—were also led to believe—that the defeat of the Unionists was practically certain. On this account, if for no other, Lord Salisbury was justified in acting on Mr Chamberlain's advice, and challenging the electors to give him and his colleagues a renewed Vote of Confidence. It was equally pedantic for his critics to suggest that he should have hesitated about taking this step just because it seemed convenient to his Party, and for his supporters to pretend that no political considerations entered into his mind.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE UNIONIST ADMINISTRATION, 1900-1903

THE appeal of Ministers to the country, as put forward in a letter from Lord Salisbury, was by no means confined to the South African Settlement, though it was mentioned as one of the main issues before the country. He referred also to Army Reform and the maintenance of British interests in the Far East, and he asked the electors to remember, whichever Party should be victorious, that unless that Party were armed with a strong majority in the House of Commons it would lack the authority at home and abroad which was essential to its task. Mr Balfour insisted more strongly on the position of South African affairs, and declared that from a Radical Administration neither firmness of purpose nor consistency of policy could be anticipated in the face of Boer resistance. Though individual members of the Opposition were in practical agreement with the Unionists on South African policy, some of the Liberal Leaders held very different views, and among the rank and file every shade of doctrine was represented, "from an ardent and resolute patriotism to something not very easy to distinguish from treasonable sympathy with the enemy." Mr Chamberlain pressed the same

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point in his Election Address—declaring that the Liberals, if placed in power, would "reverse, or at least alter, the policy which had secured the enthusiastic approval of our kinsmen in all parts of the world."

The fierce energy which he threw into the General Election of 1900 was exasperated by a new personal question. Some of the Radicals, by way of taking vengeance for his exposure of the Correspondence with the Boers, published a list of pecuniary investments held by himself and some of his near relatives with the object of casting a slight on his integrity. These attacks for the time he ignored—they did him good rather than harm. On the other hand, he pressed the most unfavourable interpretation upon the somewhat vague utterances of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and other Leaders of the Party, made before the outbreak of the War and even during its progress. He accused them of being willing to consent to a surrender to the Boers, and to leave British subjects to the mercy of President Krüger. Like Pontius Pilate they would wash their hands of the whole affair, and say it was no business of theirs!

The climax of invective, so it seemed, was reached in a telegram which he despatched in support of the Unionist candidate in the Heywood Division of Lancashire. "Every seat lost to the Government," the message ran, "is a seat gained by the Boers." This was, in effect, what he had previously said on a score of platforms; and, whether fair or unfair, it was no more than Mr Balfour and a hundred other Unionists had implied in their Addresses and speeches. But by an error, which was subsequently explained, the message as delivered was "Every seat lost

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by the Government is a seat sold to the Boers." The mistake — which was afterwards acknowledged to be entirely due to a telegraph clerk —was not cleared up till a certain amount of misconception had arisen, and many persons who had no sympathy with "pro-Boer" policy regretted that such an imputation should be made against politicians who might be unpatriotic but certainly were not corrupt. A slight reaction in favour of the Opposition was caused by this blunder, but, on the whole, the result of the General Election was a triumphant vindication of Mr Chamberlain's policy in asking for an immediate appeal to the people. Though the Unionist majority had been appreciably reduced, it was still overwhelming. The Conservatives (334) and the Liberal Unionists (68) outnumbered by 134 the combined Liberal and Labour Parties (186) and the Irish Nationalists (82).

It was not probable that, even after so great a victory, the old Government would go on just as before. Lord Salisbury himself was known to desire an early release from his too arduous duties, but, having appealed to the country as Prime Minister, he felt himself bound, after the renewal of public confidence, to retain that position. Nor was it considered advisable, at that time, to raise the question of succession. Though there was no fear of personal rivalry between Mr Balfour and Mr Chamberlain, whose mutual understanding was quite complete, indiscreet partisans on either side might have rendered the position somewhat uncomfortable. Nor would it have been considered expedient, either by Conservatives or Liberal Unionists, to compromise the question by the selection of the Duke of Devonshire. The solution of what hardly amounted to a

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difficulty was found in Lord Salisbury remaining Prime Minister and taking the office of Privy Seal, but retiring from the Foreign Office—where he made room for Lord Lansdowne, who had been far from comfortable at the War Office. He was succeeded in the latter position by Mr Brodrick, and Mr Gerald Balfour was sent to the Board of Trade, giving up the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland to Mr George Wyndham, whose promotion was marked by admission within the Cabinet. Mr Ritchie succeeded Sir Matthew White Ridley as Home Secretary; Lord Selborne took the place of Mr Goschen at the Admiralty, and Mr Chaplin vacated the Local Government Board in favour of Mr Walter Long; Mr Hanbury became Minister of Agriculture, and Lord Londonderry Postmaster General.

Neither the changes within the Cabinet nor those in the minor offices of the Government altered the balance of power between Conservatives and Liberal Unionists. Indeed, the reconstruction of the Ministry, which brought little fresh blood to it, testified to the undiminished personal influence of Lord Salisbury. The retirement of Mr T. W. Russell, nominally a Liberal Unionist, from the office of Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, where he was succeeded by a Conservative, Mr Grant Lawson, was compensated by the appointment of Mr Arnold-Forster as Secretary of the Admiralty. So far as Mr Chamberlain's hand could be traced in the exercise of patronage it was shown in the promotion of Lord Selborne, Under Secretary for the Colonies, to a position of Cabinet rank.

The brief Winter Session of 1900 was opened

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on 3rd December, and the Queen's speech announced that the only business for Parliament was to make the necessary provisions for the expenses of the War. It was inevitable, however, that the conduct of Ministers should be criticised in the Debate on the Address, and Mr Chamberlain, in particular, was singled out for attack—especially for his publication of the Correspondence with the Boers. He explained that no objections had been made by the Dutch politicians whose letters had been printed. The language used by Dr Clark and Mr Labouchere, he said, amounted to "moral treason," and the information which Mr John Ellis had requested from a Boer lady was not to be the whole truth, but "a stream of facts" which he might use in Parliament to damage his opponents. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had declared that the person who published these letters was unworthy of his society. Well, the act was the act of the whole Government—a statement to which Mr Balfour heartily assented. Mr Chamberlain added that, though some of his phrases might have led to misconception, he had never attacked any man's private character, while there had been a "perfect conspiracy of insinuations and charges against himself and those nearest to him."

The attacks to which he referred were renewed in Parliament by Mr Lloyd-George, who moved an Amendment to the effect that Ministers of the Crown and members holding subordinate office in the Government should hold no interest, direct or indirect, in any firm or Company competing for contracts with the Crown, unless the nature and extent of the interest had first been declared. This was directly aimed against the Colonial Secretary

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and his son the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. The Debate was piquant, but it was generally felt, by members who had least regard for Mr Chamberlain, that the question should not have been raised in this shape, even if the general principle asserted was in itself worthy of support. Mr Chamberlain had no difficulty in showing that for any indiscreet use which had been made of his name he had no shadow of responsibility, and that in only two from the list of Companies mentioned did he hold any interest. For the investments of his relatives he could not be answerable, nor had any of them ever asked him to use his influence on their behalf. The discussion had lowered the dignity of the House of Commons, and given pain to his relatives, but done no injury to himself. Those members who supported Mr Lloyd-George's Amendment dissociated themselves from the personal issues which had been raised, and Mr Balfour declared that, so far as the Motion was an attack on the Colonial Secretary, it was without a shadow of foundation. It had not been brought forward in the interest of purity—but only to damage Mr Chamberlain. Because he had made his power felt in the country they regarded him with special aversion. But they had failed in their attack that evening as they had failed at the General Election.

Though the year 1901 was, in many respects, a memorable one in Mr Chamberlain's career, the Session was more remarkable for the proposals than for the achievements of the Government of which he was a leading member. The bold and comprehensive plan, more or less framed by Sir John Gorst, for the reconstruction of the educational system, Elementary, Secondary, and

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Technical, throughout England and Wales was not introduced till 7th May—much too late for so complicated and contentious a scheme of reform. The reasons for delay were explained, by way of tacit apology, in the King's Speech on the Prorogation (17th August). "Unusual demands," it was said, "had been made upon the time at the disposal of Parliament by the Demise of the Crown, by the continuance of an arduous War, and the necessity of providing fresh Revenue by a wider range of taxation." In other words, the Opposition, though weak in point of number, had made such effective use of their opportunities for lengthy discussion given by the various questions arising out of the War, the Budget, and the state of the Army, that Ministers could make little progress with their legislative programme. On 28th June, Mr Balfour announced that the Education Bill must be abandoned. But a temporary Measure would be introduced, and pressed through Parliament, which would meet the emergency caused by the "Cockerton Judgment," and enable the School Boards to carry on, for the ensuing twelve months, the work of Higher Education from funds which, it was now decided, they had no legal right to apply to that purpose. Even this proposal met with keen resistance, and on one occasion the Government majority fell to 17, but on 30th July, the Third Reading was carried in the House of Commons; the Bill passed quietly through the House of Lords, and on 9th August received the Royal Assent.

Among the minor Measures carried by the Government, was one for amending and consolidating the existing laws as to Factories and Workshops, and another for mitigating the penal-

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ties that might be inflicted upon Youthful Offenders. Both these Acts fell within the scope of that social legislation which Mr Chamberlain has so steadily advocated, but, as Colonial Secretary, he naturally felt a more personal interest in the Royal Titles Act, which made the first formal recognition of the Crown as the connecting link between the United Kingdom and the "British Dominions beyond the Seas." No Constitutional innovation was disguised under this official declaration of Imperial Unity. It was intended simply as a compliment to the Colonies, and a graceful inauguration of the new Reign. If it was made at the instance of the King, it was also understood to be welcome to the Premiers of the Self-Governing Communities, with whom Mr Chamberlain was to hold conference in the ensuing year.

Frequent as were Mr Chamberlain's interventions in Parliamentary Debate during the 1901 Session, they related chiefly to South African affairs, and such reference to them as is necessary will be found in another Chapter. But of the warm discussions provoked by the Budget proposals he was something more than an interested spectator. The increase of the Income Tax from one shilling to fourteen pence in the pound was an impost sufficiently excused by its absolute necessity in a year of active warfare — unwelcome as it must have been to a Statesman who still believed in the possibility of setting up some system of Old Age Pensions for the Deserving Poor.

There was more difficulty about the Chancellor of the Exchequer's scheme for expanding the Revenue by resort to Indirect Taxation. It was almost an axiom of "The Radical Programme"

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that "direct taxes are preferable to indirect taxes," and for many years successive Governments had acted on this principle. Certainly, it was an anomalous position for one of Mr Gladstone's old colleagues to make himself responsible for the Sugar Tax and the Duty on exported coal. On the other hand, it must be remembered that Mr Chamberlain had always maintained that every class should make a fair contribution to the cost of Government, and had even countenanced, if he had not personally advocated, the imposition of a Poll Tax. There was, therefore, no inconsistency with his past declarations in his consenting to lay some part of the national burden on the working classes, and, as the experts seemed to be agreed that for the present Direct Taxation had reached its limit, there was nothing for it but to support some such Budget as Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had brought forward.

In financial policy Mr Chamberlain had not yet committed himself to any definite creed. Logical or illogical, his position was that of an eclectic. He has denounced as heartily as Mr Bright, and would denounce again to-morrow, such a Protectionist system as prevailed before the repeal of the Corn Laws. He objected to it in the past because it aimed at bolstering up the Landed Interest at the cost of the commerce and manufacturing industry of the country. He would protest against the revival of it because the enormous increase of our population forbids us even to contemplate any Measure that might diminish the supply of food. But there his Free Trade doctrine, so far as he has formally expounded it, begins and ends. As will be seen from his remarks at the Conferences with the

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Colonial Premiers, and in numerous public speeches, he had for some years been disposed to confine the application of Free Trade to the limits of the British Empire, and to institute a modified system of Protection as against the outside world. Since, therefore, he has never belonged to the stricter sect of the "Manchester School," he was committing no act of economic apostasy when he took his share of responsibility for a Budget which some of its critics denounced as an inroad on our traditional policy of Free Trade. His quite recent advocacy of a Preferential system between the Mother Country and the Self-Governing Colonies is dealt with in the last Chapter.

His attitude towards the Registration Duty on imported corn, etc., was explicitly defined in his defence of the Budget of the following year. In a speech delivered at Birmingham on 16th May 1902, he pointed out that of the 228 millions which the War had cost, 150 millions were to be raised by loan, and that the remaining 78 millions were to be distributed between 40 millions laid upon the payers of Income Tax and 38 millions raised by Indirect Taxation. Broadly, that was a fair division. But of that 38 millions about 2½ millions were to be drawn from a Duty of threepence a hundredweight on imported Corn and fivepence on imported Flour, about half of which might be called a Bread Tax. It amounted, he said, to less than one-eighth of a penny on the four-pound loaf, yet the Opposition called it a tax on the poor.

"They appeal," he said, "to passion and prejudices, and they recall all the evil traditions of a time when the Bread Tax was indeed a serious burden, when the Bread Tax was not threepence

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per hundredweight, but 20s. a quarter, and even more; at a time when the wages of the working classes were, on an average, only half what they are at present, and at a time when they were paying not only this 20s. a quarter, but they were paying also very much more, in many cases many times more on other articles of common consumption. Well, let the tax be considered upon its merits by all means, but it is treated with gross exaggeration, and it is ridiculous and unfair and dishonest to attempt to make any kind of comparison between a tax of this kind and the state of things which existed fifty or sixty years ago when the Corn Laws pressed so heavily upon the working classes of this country. The economists who have dealt with this question tell us that there is grave reason to doubt whether we shall pay it at all, whether it will not fall upon the producers in other countries, and they quote as a proof of this that the tax on sugar has not raised the price of sugar, but that it has been borne by the growers of beet on the Continent of Europe. I am sure I hope they are true. I confess I think there is a certain humour in the thought that those who have denounced us, who have calumniated us in connection with this War, will have themselves partly to pay for it. But I have not come down here to my own people to defend this tax on the ground that you will not pay any of it. I will assume that you will pay, every one of you, an average of one-eighth of a penny per four-pound loaf more than you paid before. Now, what is the argument in favour of this tax? It is raised for a War. The War is a just War, a necessary War, a righteous War. It is a War which interests every portion of the population, not one class alone, the working class at least as much as

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every other class—a War to which the whole nation, rich and poor alike, should each contribute and be proud to contribute in turn. And when Sir William Harcourt, in the House of Commons, tells us that the working classes of this country are ready enough to cheer the War, but are unwilling to pay for it, I repudiate the sneer. When he says that they will only support the War as long as it costs them nothing, I say it is a libel on the working classes of this country. If it were true, you would be pretty representatives of your ancestors, who a century ago supported the burden of a twenty years' war against almost all the world, and supported a burden infinitely greater than any that is laid upon you, at a time when they were infinitely less able to support it."

It will be observed that this defence of the Corn Duty was based on the supposition that the impost would be temporary—that it was a special provision for an exceptional emergency in the national finances. There was no suggestion that it should be treated as a precedent, or as establishing a new departure in fiscal policy. Mr Chamberlain had not yet commenced his conference with the Colonial Premiers.

To return to 1901, his most notable utterance in that year related neither to domestic affairs nor, except indirectly, to South Africa. It was one of those sudden incursions into foreign politics, in which, as we have seen, his zeal sometimes runs away with his discretion. On this occasion, however, he won the unqualified applause of his countrymen. Irritated as all Englishmen were by baseless calumnies, both against the conduct of our troops in the field, and the measures taken by our Generals in dealing with treason and rebellion, no official protest had been presented by

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our Government except when Queen Victoria was made the subject of an exceptionally filthy cartoon in Paris. We had plenty of trouble on our hands just then, and it was considered advisable to pretend that Foreign Governments had no power to suppress these offensive publications. Nor was it, apparently, with any intention of departing from this politic reserve that Mr Chamberlain used the phrase which brought him into sharp personal conflict with Count von Bülow, the German Imperial Chancellor.

In the course of a political speech delivered at Edinburgh on 25th October (1901), he remarked that Ministers had been blamed in some quarters for not taking stronger measures against Rebels and Guerrillas. For that leniency, which had been pursued after most serious consideration, they accepted full responsibility. But the time had come—or was coming—when measures of greater severity might be necessary. "If that time comes," Mr Chamberlain remarked, "we can find precedents for anything that we may do in the action of these nations who now criticise our 'barbarity' and 'cruelty,' but whose example in Poland, in the Caucasus, in Algeria, in Tongking, in Bosnia, in the Franco-German War, we have never even approached."

It was a natural, if not an altogether advisable, retort. But while it passed almost unheeded in France and Russia it aroused fury in Germany and German Austria. Although the Kaiser was almost ostentatiously friendly to King Edward, and although in Diplomatic matters his Government were acting in complete harmony with ours, anti-English demonstrations were held in Berlin and other great cities, and the most virulent attacks were printed and freely circulated. It was wanton

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audacity, we were told, that an English Minister should compare the conduct of German conscripts with the cowardly mercenaries who had placed old men and women in front of their ranks to protect themselves from the bullets of the Boers! This was one of the fictions most industriously put about by the Hollander Agency in Europe, and, for the credit of Germans, we must take it that they honestly believed the lies that were circulated on what purported to be the evidence of eye-witnesses. At heart, though no friends of ours at present, they are an amiable and placable race. For nearly the life-time of a generation their only acquaintance with War had been drawn from the parade-ground and annual Manœuvres. Most of them had forgotten the stern realities of 1870-1871, and they were shocked by bloodshed not perpetrated by their own countrymen, and in a cause which they reprobated. Though a whole nation may be demented for a time with patriotic rage or sentimental enthusiasm—Englishmen have fallen into similar excitements—it will not carry on a campaign of wilful defamation. If the Germans had known that the atrocities charged against our Generals and soldiers were simply inventions of the enemy they would have displayed less irritation at Mr Chamberlain's speech. They would have realised, on consideration, that his suggested comparison of our treatment of the Cape traitors and Boer guerrillas with the punishment which had been meted out by their Commanders to the French Irregulars was absolutely fair and just.* As a matter of fact, they regarded his words as an affront

* What that treatment was may be seen from the German Army Order issued in August 1870. It was translated by Dr T. Miller Maguire, and quoted in his lecture at

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to the nation; the agitation became so violent throughout the latter months of the year that Count von Bülow—a time-serving placeman who pretends to be a Bismarck, and keeps himself in office by trimming an even balance between the orders of the Kaiser and the favour of a precarious majority in the Reichstag—thought it would pay him to read Mr Chamberlain a public lecture.

On 8th January 1902, he made the following reference to the Edinburgh speech:—"I believe we shall all be agreed, and I think all sensible

the Royal United Service Institution on 18th February 1903:—

"I.—Military jurisdiction is established by this decree. It will be extended to all the territory occupied by German troops, to every action tending to endanger the security of those troops, to causing them injury, or lending assistance to the enemy. Military jurisdiction will be considered as in force and proclaimed through all the extent of a canton as soon as it is posted in any locality forming part of it.

"II.—All persons not forming part of the French Army, and not proving their quality as soldiers by outward signs, and who

"(*a*) Shall serve the enemies as spies;

"(*b*) Shall mislead the German troops when charged to act for them as guides;

"(*c*) Shall kill, wound, or rob persons belonging to the German troops, or making part of their suite;

"(*d*) Shall destroy bridges or canals, damage telegraphic lines or railways, render roads impassable, set fire to munitions and provisions of war, or troops' quarters;

"(*e*) Shall take up arms against the German troops; will be punished by death. In each case the officer in command will institute a council of war, with authority to try the matter and pronounce sentence. These councils can only condemn to death. Their sentences will be executed immediately.

"III.—The communes to which the culprits belong, as well as those whose territory may have been the scene of

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people in England, too, will agree with us, that when a Minister considers himself called on to justify his policy—and such a thing may happen—he does well to leave foreign countries out of the discussion. Should he, however, wish to adduce examples from abroad, it is advisable that he should proceed with great caution, for otherwise he runs the risk not only of being misunderstood, but also of hurting foreign feelings, even though it be—as I am ready to assume was the case in the present instance, and as, indeed, after the assurances made to me from the other

the offence, will be condemned in a penalty for each case equalling the amount of their taxes.

"IV.—The inhabitants will have to supply all necessaries for the support of the troops. Each soldier will receive daily 750 grammes of bread, 500 grammes of meat, 250 grammes of lard, 30 grammes of coffee, 60 grammes of tobacco or 5 cigars, ½ litre of wine, or 1 litre of beer, or 0.1 of brandy. The rations to be furnished daily for each horse will be 6 kilogrammes of oats, 2 kilogrammes of hay, and 1½ kilogrammes of straw. In case of the inhabitants preferring an indemnity in coin to one in kind, it will be fixed at 2 francs each soldier daily.

"V.—All commanders of detached corps will have the right to order a requisition of provisions needful to the support of their troops. The requisition of other articles judged indispensable to the army can only be ordered by generals and officers acting as such. In all cases, nothing will be demanded of the inhabitants except what is necessary for the support of the troops; and official receipts will be given for everything supplied. We hope, therefore, that the inhabitants will not offer any obstacles to the requisitions which may be deemed necessary.

"VI.—With regard to individual bargains between the troops and the inhabitants, we fix as an equivalent for 1 franc, 8 silbergros or 28 kreutzers.

"The General Commanding-in-Chief the Third German Army,

"FREDERIC WILLIAM,
"Prince Royal of Prussia."

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side, I must assume—without any intention of doing so. This is, however, all the more regrettable when it happens in the case of a Minister, and with reference to a country which, as the previous speaker has rightly pointed out, has always entertained with his own good and friendly relations, the undisturbed continuance of which is equally to the interests of both parties. It is quite comprehensible that in a people which has become so thoroughly part and parcel of its glorious Army as the German people has—and the previous speaker very rightly emphasised this point—the general feeling of the nation should revolt against any appearance of the heroic character and moral basis of our national struggle for Unity being subject to misrepresentation. But the German Army stands much too high, and its escutcheon is too bright for them to be affected by warped judgments. Anything of the kind is well answered by the reply which Frederic the Great gave when he was told that somebody had been attacking him and the Prussian Army. 'Let the man alone,' said the great king, 'and do not excite yourselves. He is biting at granite.'"

It appeared afterwards that in the version of Mr Chamberlain's words which was telegraphed to the Continent the sense had been considerably distorted, and conveyed a more offensive imputation than the speaker had in his mind. But as for "the assurances from the other side" to which the Count referred, and which some of the German newspapers represented as a sort of apology, they simply took the form of explaining to the German Ambassador what had been actually said. This was made clear by Mr Balfour's statement in the House of Commons (17th January) that "nothing

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in the opinion of His Majesty's Government required to be said in the direction of either qualifying or retracting the speech of his right honourable friend." Moreover, at Manchester, on the 10th, Mr Balfour himself spoke with contempt of the "disgusting tide of calumny" which was poured out ceaselessly from the Continental Press. On the following day, at Birmingham, Mr Chamberlain was evidently in no repentant mood. The language he used was not that of a Minister whose conduct had been apologised for. If he had committed any offence on 10th October 1901, he aggravated it on 11th January 1902, by making a direct attack on the German Chancellor. He began by holding up to reprobation these English partisans of the Boer cause who fouled their own nests, encouraged the enemies of this country, and furnished material to foreign countries for the malignant libels which they uttered against us.

"I understand," he said, "a good Party fight. I myself am a Party man. When I am struck I try to strike back again. But I cannot appreciate the position of those who are influenced by Party passion, and not content with fighting the battle here at home on fair and reasonable lines, must go out of their way to impute methods of barbarism to our soldiers in the field, to imply that His Majesty's Ministers, who are Britons like themselves, can, by any possibility, be guilty of deliberate cruelty and inhumanity, and who laud the Boers while they slander the Britons, and then profess to be astonished and surprised at the growing hostility of foreign nations. They have helped to create the animosity which we all deplore. I am well aware that in some quarters this animosity is attributed

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to another cause. It is said to be due to the indiscreet oratory of the Colonial Secretary. Gentlemen, what I have said I have said. I withdraw nothing. I qualify nothing. I defend nothing. As I read history, no British Minister has ever served his country faithfully and at the same time enjoyed popularity abroad.

"I make allowance, therefore, for foreign criticism. I will not follow an example that has been set to me. I do not want to give lessons to a foreign Minister, and I will not accept any at his hands. I am responsible only to my own Sovereign and to my own countrymen. But I am ready to meet that form of criticism which is made at home, which is manufactured here for export by the friends of every country but their own; and in reference to these I would ask you, gentlemen, how can it be due to a few words in a speech that was delivered only a few weeks ago that for months and for years, from the very beginning of this War, the foreign Press has teemed with abuse of this country? How can the Colonial Secretary be made responsible for what Sir Edward Grey has called the 'foul and filthy lies,' for what Lord Rosebery has described as the 'vile and infamous defamations,' which have been disseminated in foreign countries without a syllable of protest, without the slightest interference by the responsible authorities? No, gentlemen, my opponents must look for some other scapegoat. They must look further for the causes of that feeling of hostility, which I do not think that we have deserved, but which has existed more or less for a century, at least, which always comes to the surface when we are in any difficulty, but which, I am glad to say, has never done us any serious harm."

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It was, Mr Chamberlain continued, a travesty of history to say that when the Unionists took office in 1895 they found Peace with Honour. Six burning questions of International importance had been left them as an evil legacy by their predecessors. The Siamese *imbroglio*, the Venezuelan boundary, the *Hinterland* delimitations with Germany and with France in West Africa, the Samoan dispute, and the position of the French on the Nile — with all these questions the Unionist Government had grappled successfully, and reached an honourable and satisfactory settlement. Besides this, they had maintained British interests in the Far East, and in agreeing to the immediate construction of an inter-oceanic canal had disposed of a long-standing cause of difference with the United States. These, Mr Chamberlain declared, were solid achievements in the cause of Peace. But there was something more valuable even than the goodwill of foreign nations. That was the affection and confidence of our kinsfolk across the seas. The losses and sacrifices of the War had been more than compensated. It had enabled the British Empire to "find itself," and united the British race throughout the world. It had shown to all whom it might concern that, if ever we had to fight, as we had fought in the past, for our very existence against a world in arms, we should not stand alone.

This is a point which, before the War broke out, was overlooked by Continental Statesmen who were in the habit of measuring our strength in Europe by the number of our Army. In rubbing this consideration into their minds with as much frankness as he would have employed in dealing with an adversary in the House

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of Commons, Mr Chamberlain, if he exceeded the limits of Diplomatic propriety, rendered a service to his country which could not have been performed by a Prime Minister or a Foreign Secretary. Speaking as the representative of Colonial feeling he could use language which in their mouths would have seemed almost menacing. But, as he declared, a new factor had entered into the politics of the country. In future we must take into account the opinion of the Colonies. We shall have to consult them, and, if we wished them to stand by us, we must be guided, to some extent, by their wishes and aspirations.

Undoubtedly, this speech cleared the air. It was, we were told, a "naked and brutal assertion of British Imperialism," it was a "repetition of the first insult," it was an "adroit piece of personal advertisement." The wrangle came to an end, and some of the more reasonable critics pointed out that Mr Chamberlain could never have intended to insult the German troops by comparing their conduct with that of the British, since to charge the former with misconduct would have been to confess the equal guilt of the latter. It was universally recognised, moreover, that in taking up this resolute and almost defiant attitude, he had correctly interpreted the temper of his countrymen, and that, unless Germany wished to force a quarrel upon us, it might be well to place some limit on public expressions of dislike or disapproval. The unconcealed amusement of the French newspapers, and the ostentatious indifference of Russian opinion while the dispute was in progress, reminded the most irresponsible Anglophobes in Berlin and Vienna that the German race

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would be well advised not to fall out with the only European State which does not regard it with open enmity. Besides, they ceased to be shocked at what we were doing in South Africa, when it became evident that we should be successful.

In spite of the difficulties on which the political and military pessimists were still enlarging, the opening of 1902 marked the beginning of the end of the War. The Colonial Secretary, whose administrative functions in regard to South Africa had been partially suspended while the whole region was more or less under Martial Law, became almost absorbed in thoughts of the Settlement that would follow the approaching restoration of Peace. Except on matters pertaining to his Department, he took no very active part in the Debates of a Session which began on 16th January, and, after an adjournment from 8th August to 16th October, was not closed till 18th December. But with regard to the new Education Bill, which was under keen discussion during the whole of that period, and did not become law before the day of Prorogation, it was necessary for Mr Chamberlain to make a formal defence of his well-understood position. So far from producing accord between Parties, the Debates in Parliament had only exaggerated the points of difference, and it naturally devolved on Mr Chamberlain to conciliate, if possible, the opposition of those Radical Nonconformists who on other questions had hitherto supported the Government. Amongst his own constituents there was a sharp controversy. Indeed the Bill had been formally condemned at a meeting of Liberal Unionists convoked by certain influential Birmingham politicians. It was in the hope

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of appeasing this discord that on 10th October he summoned a conference of the Liberal Unionist Party in the city—just before the commencement of the Autumn Sittings of the House of Commons. Whatever charges may be brought against him, he has never been accused of political timidity. Anxious as he was to avert a split in his Party, he spoke with perfect frankness. No amount of agitation, he said, would induce Ministers to withdraw this Bill. They would persist with it, and should it be defeated they would resign Office. As for his personal responsibility in connection with the Bill, he had taken part in discussing it both before and after it was introduced. Subsequently, he admitted, he had not followed it so closely as he could have wished. His preoccupation with South African affairs had prevented him from sitting by Mr Balfour's side and giving such help as he might be able to afford. Nor must it be supposed that the Government ever expected their Party or the country to accept the text of the Bill, line by line and word by word, just as it stood in the first instance. He had already explained the necessity for some such Measure as the one now brought forward. As an old member of the Birmingham Education League, he adhered to the opinion that State Education should be purely secular, but had long ago realised that on this point he had no chance of persuading the majority of his fellow-countrymen. Therefore he accepted an arrangement which preserved the main interest of the nation and did justice to all classes, though it did not carry out his personal views.

While he recognised that a certain number of Churchmen and Conservatives, as well as

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Nonconformist Liberal Unionists, conscientiously objected to the Bill, there were others whose opposition took the form of "wild threats" and "blatant criticism" and was entitled to no sort of consideration. They were talking about "quarrels in the Liberal Unionist Party" and a "mutiny against Mr Chamberlain—prophesying that he would be stoned in his own city, and that his political extinction was imminent."

"I beg you," he said, "to pay no attention whatever, in the discussion in which we are about to engage, to my personal position. I have been threatened many times. I have not been made afraid. The time is coming when the question of whether or not I continue in political life is a matter of absolute indifference to me. But what is of consequence—at least what I venture to think is of consequence—is that the cause and the object to which I have given my life should continue, as they are, strong in the hearts and determination of the British people. If, long after I am forgotten, these principles — for which I take no credit, since, indeed, I have no pretence to have initiated them—but those principles which combine us together as a great Imperial nation—if they remain, it matters nothing about myself or about any individual who has been concerned in promoting them. I hope the differences — if differences there be — between us at the present time may be composed, but if not, if we are unable, if we find it impossible to agree—which I do not believe—then, at least, let us agree to differ upon this contested and complicated point, upon which, indeed, differences may exist, with mutual respect and mutual regard. Let us consent to that, but let us never consent to do anything that would assist the intrigues of those who, if they were

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successful, would hand over Ireland to the Home Rulers, would transfer the settlement of the great and important problems arising in South Africa—the War in which we have been engaged—to the discretion and the patriotism of the pro-Boers, would leave our interests in the hands of the Little Englanders, who would depend for our reforms upon the framers of the Newcastle Programme."

What was wanted, Mr Chamberlain continued, was "more facts and fewer phrases." They all approved of Religious Equality. But what was meant by the expression? How far would they go to secure it? Would they force Churchmen, Dissenters, Roman Catholics, Jews, Unitarians, to pay rates for a religious education that either omitted something which one sect or the other regarded as essential or included something which they disbelieved? and would they at the same time withhold from these different creeds the right of obtaining such religious education as they did approve? Would that be Religious Equality? Though concurrent endowment might be justified nothing could be said for the endowment of a particular form of religion and the exclusion of all others. The only logical alternative was the absolute secularisation of State Education. That, however, the majority would not accept. Nor would the Nonconformists profit by an arrangement that left each sect to provide religious teaching at its own expense. Being less rich than the Church of England and the Roman Catholics, and having no machinery provided, they would be at a distinct disadvantage. Another system was that prevailing in Canada, where every ratepayer was entitled to say to what class of school his rates should be allotted? None of these plans commended themselves to

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Mr Chamberlain's mind. Was there any other alternative than the one suggested by the Government?

It was said, again, that Taxation and Representation should go together. He agreed with the principle—"speaking generally and as far as possible"—though it was by no means universally observed in any Constitution. Well, the Government Bill did provide for Representation. Possibly it might not be thought adequate—that was a question of degree—but the intention was to institute absolute popular control of the whole secular instruction. If this object was not sufficiently attained, Ministers would be bound to amend the Measure. Here was the crux of the situation.

"Suppose (he asked) that by Amendments, perhaps suggested by ourselves, but at any rate absolutely satisfactory to you, we make it perfectly clear beyond contention that the whole of the secular education of those Denominational schools is for the first time brought under popular representative control, will that satisfy you? That is the question. If we do that, will you be satisfied to leave the religious education in these schools as it has been for thirty years and a great deal more past? Will you leave that untouched in the hands of the Denominational Managers or Trustees who have provided the schools? What is the alternative? The alternative would be that you would claim that the Government, like the extreme sectarians who have recently been addressing the country, should engage in a crusade against Denominational schools—that they should force on them an undenominational system, and, that if they refuse to adopt the undenominational system, they should force upon the ratepayers

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the cost, the enormous cost, of providing substantial buildings and educating half of the whole of the children in this country. There is no eluding—there is no evading—that point, and all I ask you is to say which it is you want. Are you willing that a system which has continued so long should remain, the only change being, and that is entirely in our direction, that the whole of the secular instruction should for the first time be taken out of the hands of those Denominational and religious persons; or do you say that you insist that the opportunity of this Bill, that the necessity which was imposed upon the Government in view of the miserable condition of education in the great number of districts, should be taken advantage of by sectarians in order to destroy Denominational education?

"Well, that is a question upon which I wish your answer. But then I am bound to tell you, if the last of these two alternatives is your policy, if you are satisfied with nothing short of the destruction of the system which was generally admitted in 1870, so far as the Denominational schools are concerned—there was no question then about the destruction of the Denominational schools—if you desire that this opportunity should be seized in order to make a revolutionary change of that kind, you are going altogether beyond any compact between the Unionist Parties, and you are putting yourselves in a position in which no arrangement of any kind is possible. It will be no use our proposing concessions which we know beforehand will be rejected. We will be glad to meet you in any reasonable form or direction, but if you ask that we should go so far from our original direction as to take up and to carry through a policy which no Radical Government has ever dared to

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suggest—then I say you are going beyond what is reasonable, and you must face the position in that case. If there are such persons who take such extreme views in our ranks, all I would say to them is that I would, most earnestly and sincerely appeal to them. I say we must agree to differ. We cannot go altogether upon those lines, but I would ask them whether they think that, on account of this one difference in so many, they would be justified in breaking up the Unionist Party, or in trying to break it up, not because the Government is doing something new, to which they have a right to object, not because we are reactionary in our proposals, but simply because, at the dictation of what, after all, is a very small minority of the country, we refuse to undertake an entirely new departure, adopt a policy which was disclaimed altogether by everybody who was concerned in the agitation of 1870, which was no part whatever of the programme either of the Central Nonconformists Committee or of the National Education League. I cannot impress upon you too strongly the importance of settling this vital point. Do you complain of the Government because they have gone backwards? In that case, your complaint ought to be considered. It ought to be fully answered; and, if it cannot be answered, we ought to amend the Bill, so as to satisfy you. But, on the other hand, if you complain that we do not undertake something entirely new, something altogether beyond anything to which any of us were ever pledged, then I venture to say you are unreasonable. You will not get it from the Unionist Government—and let me add you certainly will not get it from the Radical Government who would succeed the Unionist Government—but you will get a great deal that

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you will not like. I do not believe that there is any appreciable proportion of men in our ranks who take a view so unreasonable as that."

The remainder of the speech dealt with points of detail, and, after a prolonged private discussion, Mr Chamberlain invited the meeting to vote Yes or No to a series of questions which he had prepared.

First.—Are you or are you not in favour of popular control of secular instruction, whilst safeguarding the religious instruction, in accordance with the views of the founders?—This was answered in the affirmative by a large majority, the Noes numbering ten.

Second.—With the view of safeguarding this instruction, are you ready to leave the election of the head teacher in the hands of the managers?—Answered in the affirmative by a large majority, the Noes numbering sixteen.

Third.—Are you in favour of the abolition of the Cowper-Temple Clause?—Answered in the negative, the Ayes numbering four.

Fourth.—Should the Council appoint a majority of the Education Committee from its own body?—Answered in the affirmative, the Noes numbering one.

The "special verdict" was, thus, in favour of the Government Bill, but its effect was, no doubt, somewhat discounted by the almost unanimous declaration, elicited by the two leading dissentients, that "the majority of the Management Committee of each of the Voluntary Schools, so far as secular instruction was concerned, should be popularly elected."

What exactly was the effect produced by Mr Chamberlain's address was, even at the time, a

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matter of conjecture. But the broad results were at once apparent. He had failed, on the one hand, to convince his leading opponents: on the other, it was clear that no split would occur in the Liberal Unionist Party, and that those who most strongly disapproved of the Government Bill would continue their general support of the Unionist Administration. This much Mr Chamberlain had attained, and probably this was all he had looked for. He knows Birmingham men too well to think that prominent citizens who had taken a strong line on any question of the day would be converted by an adroit public speech, or would not have considered any arguments that he could produce to them in a private conference. The most to which they could be expected to assent was not to play into the hands of the common adversary.

In the Debate on Mr Balfour's Motion (11th November) to apply the "Closure by Compartment" to those clauses of the Education Bill which had not passed through Committee, Mr Chamberlain was in an awkward position. In resisting a similar proposal, nine years before, with regard to the Home Rule Bill, he had described it a precedent which would "cloud the honour of the House of Commons," and "risk the free liberties of Parliament." That he had said "quite apart from the circumstances of the merits or demerits of that particular Bill or the proceedings under it." This had been quoted against him, beforehand, by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and the House was naturally anxious to see how he would set up a sufficient *distinguo*. Moreover, some of the ground had been cut away under his feet by Mr Balfour who, in a conciliatory speech, had exonerated the Opposition as a body from

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the charge of Obstruction. It was impossible for Mr Chamberlain to express, on this point, an opinion different from his Chief's, though he hinted that Mr Balfour's courteous admission had been somewhat too general. But, though Mr Chamberlain might not accuse the other side of Obstruction, he did assert that they had done all they could to prevent the Bill passing. They had tried to smother it by Amendments. If that was not Obstruction, he should like to know how they would define the term? Nor did he blame them. He himself had obstructed Bills which he thought obnoxious. They said that their object was to "improve" the Education Bill. He believed that they wished to destroy it—as he had wished to destroy the Home Rule Bill. But how far the Rules of the House should permit such a course was another question, but so long as they did permit it that course would be followed. The best justification for the decision of Ministers to force the Bill through the House was that on almost every Division they had gained a majority of nearly two to one—indeed, the average was three to one!

As for the argument that Ministers had no "mandate" to pass an Education Bill, because the General Election of 1900 had turned on the War, he retorted that, on such reasoning, Mr Gladstone had received no "mandate" for the Home Rule Bill of 1893, since the General Election of 1892 had turned on the Newcastle Programme, every candidate using just that part of it which he thought most popular in his own Constituency. Except the Irish members, and a few English Radicals like Mr John Morley, who were personally identified with the cause, very few had insisted strongly on Home Rule,

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and Mr Gladstone himself, though plied with numberless inquiries, had refused even to give an outline of his plan. The Opposition had not the faintest idea what sort of a Bill he was going to produce.

Thus far, Mr Chamberlain had carried the majority of the House with him, but in the heat of discussion he fell into one of those mistakes which beset a speaker who relies too much on his readiness. Mr Lloyd-George, he said, had introduced an entirely new idea.

"He says that the object of this closure is that we are afraid of a split in our Party, and he gave as evidence of this approaching revolt or revolution a certain meeting in Birmingham. I do not want to say much about the meeting in Birmingham, except that if it was satisfactory to him, I can assure him, from the bottom of my heart, it was eminently satisfactory to me. I may say that I am told that in Birmingham, where this revolt or revolution, as described in some of the Opposition papers, is to take place, I am shortly to receive from my friends and fellow-citizens an exceptional welcome. Do you object to that? I do not want to be ungenerous. In what way is it ungenerous? I will not include in what I have to say any of the Liberals of Birmingham; but, as regards the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives, who are the only people whom you profess to believe to be in revolt, I speak with confidence, and I know that I have not lost their support. That is my point. The idea that, because a great Party on a complicated Bill has displayed certain differences of opinion, there is the commencement of a revolt or mutiny, or that those who take a different view of the Bill than themselves are about to join the Radical

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Party, is utterly absurd to those who know the political life of Birmingham."

Undoubtedly, Mr Chamberlain had not intended to suggest that the part which his political opponents were about to take in the public ceremony at Birmingham signified approval of his Education policy, but his *impromptu* reference to their action was so worded that it gave the Opposition moralists an opportunity for lecturing him in a breach of etiquette.* All he had intended to say—as he explained directly afterwards—was that the friendliness accorded to him by his own people in Birmingham showed that what was called the revolt had not gone very far.

A more acute controversy—one that recalled old days—had arisen earlier in the Session. In the course of a general defence of the Government policy in South Africa, the Colonial Secretary had referred to the vain persistence of the Boer guerrillas in prolonging the state of war, and quoted

* The invitation to take part in the public banquet to Mr Chamberlain had been accepted by the Birmingham Liberal Association on the understanding that the honour was to be paid to him by his fellow-citizens as to the "accredited representative of the nation" who was going out to South Africa "with the object of solving, in a generous spirit, the complicated problems that await solution." It was resolved on 3rd November by the Management Committee of the Association as follows :—

"1. There was a unanimous feeling that Mr Chamberlain's journey was wisely conceived in the interests of future peace.

"2. There was a unanimous opinion that every Liberal anxious for the fusion of parties and races in South Africa would do his best to make Mr Chamberlain's mission a success.

"3. That Mr Chamberlain was more likely to be successful, if it was clearly understood that he came, not in any narrow political capacity, but as representing all classes and

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the language of the Boer General Vilonel who had declared that the enemies of his country were those who continued a hopeless struggle. "Vilonel is a traitor!" ejaculated Mr Dillon. "No, sir, he is not," retorted Mr Chamberlain; "the hon. gentleman is a good judge of traitors,"—here a scene of uproar broke out, and when Mr Dillon at last got a hearing he said, "I desire to say, Mr Speaker, that the right hon. gentleman is a damned liar." As he refused to withdraw that expression there was nothing for it but for Mr Balfour to move that he should be suspended. The Irish members thought that Mr Dillon had been unfairly treated, because Mr Chamberlain's expression had not been rebuked by the Speaker, and on 7th May they brought forward what was virtually a Vote of Censure on the Chair. In this, of course, they were defeated by an overwhelming majority. By raising this issue they prevented any authoritative declaration being made as to whether Mr Chamberlain had exceeded the limits of Parliamentary order. Probably he had

parties in England who desire South Africa (torn with war and racked with internal dissensions) to settle down into a peaceful, self-governing, law-abiding community.

"4. It was also clearly understood that the presence of representatives from the Birmingham Liberal Association did not in any way commit them or the Association to any approval of Mr Chamberlain's action or language respecting any other matter than the mission in hand.

"5. The Committee received official assurance that Mr Chamberlain clearly understood the nature of the gathering, and had definitely declared his intention of not making a Party political speech.

"6. Under these circumstances the Committee felt they ought not to allow their strong disapproval of much of Mr Chamberlain's Party strategy, and their indignation on account of what they think his unjust criticisms of their opinions, to prevent their support of him in a policy which may be fraught with lasting consequences to the peace and prosperity of South Africa."

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done so, but, as the Speaker pointed out at the time, the original provocation had come from Mr Dillon, and if hon. members did not interrupt they would not be subject to retorts.

Throughout the Session of 1902 the Irish members were in an unusually explosive temper. Openly sympathising, as many of them did, with the Boers in their struggle for Independence, they were embittered by the constantly accumulating evidence that the already proclaimed Annexation of the two Republics would very soon be rendered effective. They rejoiced without disguise in any incident that seemed likely to delay the final triumph of the British arms, and some of them, when the news of the defeat and capture of Lord Methuen on 7th March was read out in the House of Commons, were so imprudent as to greet it with a cheer—a puerile and unmannerly display which disgusted most of their Liberal friends.

Their animosity was especially directed against the Statesman whom they regarded as chiefly responsible for an oppressive policy, nor was their attitude towards the Government generally modified by the comprehensive Measure for assisting Land Purchase in Ireland, introduced by Mr George Wyndham on 25th March. Their reception of that Bill was so cold and contemptuous (on the ground that it did not provide for Compulsory Sale), that the Chief Secretary in the Autumn Session announced that it would be withdrawn.

Apart from his relations towards Mr Redmond's followers, and from occasional brushes with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr Asquith, and other Opposition Leaders, the Session of 1902 was for Mr Chamberlain unusually pacific. It was generally recognised,

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even by those who blamed his Diplomacy before and during the War, that he was honestly desirous of arranging a fair and permanent settlement of South African problems. When it was announced on 27th October that he was about to make a visit to the scene of the late War, he was universally complimented and congratulated on so bold a departure from Downing Street precedent. The hopes with which his mission was contemplated before he started were faithfully recalled after his return by Mr John Morley in a speech (13th April 1903) at Montrose. Though it was still too soon to estimate the results achieved, the old friend and never ungenerous opponent declared that all Parties agreed in recognising "the manful and intrepid spirit which induced Mr Chamberlain to go and watch the working of his own policy on the spot, and to endeavour to produce from it the fruits of a real conciliation."

The slight misunderstanding caused by Mr Chamberlain's reference in the House of Commons to the honour about to be paid him in Birmingham soon passed away. When he went down on 17th November to be the guest of the City it was clear that all Parties had joined cordially in the popular reception. John Bright himself, the greatest of modern English orators, and, with all his limitations, one of the noblest figures in the public life of the Nineteenth Century, had not appealed more closely to the civic pride of his fellow-townsmen than the Minister who, after thirty years spent in unceasing strife, was acclaimed by the universal voice as the one man who might, perchance, heal the wounds left by a bitter and desolating War, because he could be trusted to do equal justice between discordant races, clashing factions, and intriguing politicians.

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His industry in mastering facts, his skill in managing men, had been generally recognised ever since he became prominent in politics; his sincerity in following out what he regarded as the patriotic policy had for many years been admitted by most of his political adversaries; but it must be confessed that the public faith in his impartiality was, at the end of 1902, a growth of only a few months, and the expectations of his success in the character of Conciliator were based chiefly on public speeches and administrative acts subsequent to the Peace of Vereeniging. Whatever may prove to be the results of his mission to South Africa, there was not at the end of 1902, and will not be hereafter, any question either as to the motives with which he started or the hopes he inspired. The decorations of the public buildings in his own City, the crowds assembled in the streets to greet his arrival and departure, the bonfires, the torchlight processions, the complimentary speeches at the Banquet, where the tributes paid by his friends hardly went beyond what his adversaries would have conceded—all these popular demonstrations did but add the emphasis of local enthusiasm to the general expression of national confidence.

The task on which he was about to engage was, he believed, not an impossible one. The first duty of the country was to deal wisely and generously with those who had stood by us—the second duty was to induce those who had recently been in arms against us to accept the new situation. "This," he said, "is our task. Why should we despair of it? Have we not much in our past to justify optimism in such a case. Why, in our own history, there were times when Royalists and Puritans, or Jacobites and

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Hanoverians, even Scotchmen and Englishmen were separated much more widely than are British and Boers to-day. And, on the other side of the Atlantic, in America, the terrible wounds that were left by the greatest of Civil Wars have been healed over, and now we have, in the most powerful and the most numerous of English-speaking peoples, an absolutely united nation. And in our own Colonies have we not had an equal difficulty to deal with? Do we not now see the descendants of the men who fought at Montcalm against Wolfe in Canada—do we not see their descendants—now sending to be Prime Minister of the Dominion one of themselves, a man universally respected and popular with both races? I hold that these are examples which show us that if the task is difficult it is not impossible, and if it is not impossible Englishmen—Britons—will accomplish it.

"The burden of this task has fallen, and will continue to fall, mainly on the shoulders of Lord Milner. It is to his policy of firmness and moderation combined that we look for a successful result. We have placed upon him a great responsibility. We have given him our full confidence, and, if I now go out to South Africa with his cordial approval, one of my chief objects is that I may be better able, when I return, to support his policy, when I have gained a wider knowledge and a clearer understanding of it. I shall see on the spot all the difficulties with which he has been confronted. I shall gain a better conception of the colossal task that he has undertaken, and I believe that in this way, and by that frank interchange which will take place of views and opinions, we shall be able to preserve a harmonious co-operation between the Home and

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Colonial Government, which is an essential condition of success in every case of Colonial Administration. But I do not go to South Africa to see Lord Milner only, I go to see every representative of every class and race and section who may desire to see me. My ears will be open to all that they have to say to me, my eyes to all that they will show me, and in this way I cannot help thinking that, though my stay must necessarily be short, I shall learn more in a few days of this intimate acquaintance with the people of the country than I could possibly gain by months of study of Blue Books and official Despatches."

It was not unfitting that this profession of faith should be made in the Liberal and Progressive city which has hitherto followed him faithfully—though not always without hesitation and searchings of heart—in each new phrase of a varied career. The tribute he paid to his fellow-townsmen had been amply earned. He spoke of their public spirit and energy, their independence and broad-minded toleration as the qualities which had made Birmingham a city great in the eyes of men!

"But (he continued) if I go on to say why I love it, then I am touched with more than a personal note. How should I do otherwise than love it? Here is my home, here is my family life, and no man owes more than I do for the blessings of a family life. Here I have sorrowed, and here I have rejoiced, and through good and evil, through all the vicissitudes of my career, the sympathy and the goodwill of the people of Birmingham have followed it and bound me to it by links of steel. The great share which you have had in the precious memories of my life, and—now that I am starting on a new experiment, that I am

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attempting a great adventure, of which I know as well as anyone that there are connected with it great risks of failure—the fact that you have given me a proof of your continued kindness, of your goodwill and your interest, which will follow me on every stage of that arduous work, are the best augury for my success."

The legislation of 1903 calls for no more than a brief summary in these pages, since most of the Government Measures had been prepared during Mr Chamberlain's absence, and much of the rough preliminary work in Parliament was transacted before his return. The chief Act of the Session, perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the Unionist Administration, was carried by Mr George Wyndham. His great scheme of State-aided Land Purchase in Ireland was largely, though not entirely, based on the recommendation of a Conference which Lord Dunraven had convened between representative landlords and tenants; and the Bill, as subsequently modified in Committee, gave satisfaction to all but a few extreme men on either side. Roughly, it provides for the gradual advance, within the next fifteen years, of a sum estimated at 100 millions, on very easy terms as to interest and repayment by the purchasing tenants. But the distinctive feature of Mr Wyndham's scheme is the bonus of 12 millions which is to be distributed among the landlords who consent to part with their estates, and which works out as an addition of 12 per cent. to the agreed price. By this inducement he hopes to achieve practically the same results as by the compulsory expropriation on which some of the Nationalist Party had threatened to insist, but which no Conservative Minister could have countenanced. In spite of

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prolonged debate on the almost innumerable minor issues presented by a complicated Bill, it was clear from the first that neither landlords nor tenants meant to wreck the proposal, as they knew that many years would pass before they would obtain so favourable an offer. When the "Zone" question had been settled by mutual accommodation, and the proposal to retain one-eighth of the purchase annuity in the hands of the State had been abandoned, no serious opposition was encountered from any Irish quarter. The only important criticism proceeded from English members who distrusted the security on which the advance was to be made. In case the tenants should make default, the only remedy of the Government would be to withhold the grants for local administration. Such a remedy would, no doubt, prove illusory, but Mr Wyndham convinced Parliament that the danger apprehended was also imaginary. It is, however, no secret that Mr Chamberlain was by no means enamoured of the Measure, and, on his return from South Africa, sought to modify considerably.

Gratitude for the Land Bill was not the only reason why the Nationalist Members gave Ministers an almost unwavering support throughout the Session. Being as a body Roman Catholics, they were anxious for the success of the London Education Bill, which aimed at extending to the Metropolis the same principles as had been applied by the Act of 1902 to the other parts of England and Wales. They felt no interest in the dispute over the conflicting claims of the County Council and the Borough Councils to representation on the Education Authority. All they cared about was that schools in which a distinctive religious teaching is administered should be assured

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of a subvention from the Rates. With this main purpose in view, they stood by Ministers in several critical Divisions, and ensured the success of a Measure which, neither in its original form nor in any of its subsequent modifications, had obtained the general approval of the Unionist Party, while the controversies in Parliament added fresh fuel to a fierce agitation which had been got up out-of-doors by Dr Clifford and other promoters of "Passive Resistance."

The Port of London Bill (which had to be dropped) and the Motor Car Bill (which became law) were, with Army Reform and the Venezuelan disturbance, the only topics that for the time drew public attention from the issues directly or indirectly raised by Mr Chamberlain.

Though it was known that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be able to make a substantial reduction in the burdens of the country, the proposals for the coming Budget had been kept scrupulously secret. This reserve was the less surprising, because when they were made public it was clear that they had only been settled at the last moment, and, so it was shrewdly conjectured, not without keen discussion among Ministers. Mr Ritchie, in a public speech, had spoken in a sanguine spirit about his hope of giving relief to the payers of Income Tax, but he had also expressed his approval of the indirect taxes which had been recently adopted. It was, therefore, with universal astonishment that the country heard not only that fourpence would be taken from the fifteen-penny Income Tax, but that the Corn Duty would also be abandoned. Various were the explanations offered by Ministers. It was said that the surplus (which considerably exceeded 10 millions) had turned out to be much

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larger than was anticipated at the Treasury, and that Ministers had always intended to give up the Corn Duty, because, as Mr Ritchie confessed, it lent itself so easily to misrepresentation. That is to say, it was denounced by Cobdenite Radicals as the thin end of the Protectionist wedge. There is no authority for stating, but plenty of reasons have since appeared for guessing, the feelings with which Mr Chamberlain would regard both the decision at which the Cabinet had arrived, and the reasons put forward by way of explanation.

At first there was no clue to the mystery. Unionists who had defended the Corn Duty both in Parliament and before their constituents were undisguisedly puzzled what line to follow. If the Government had been right in 1902, it followed that they must be wrong in 1903; and those Conservative Members, who have always cherished hopes of the country reverting to Protective legislation in favour of British Agriculture were openly indignant. Mr Chaplin, as their representative, gave notice of a hostile Amendment to the Second Reading of the Finance Bill, and an animated Debate was expected. Meantime, the whole situation was suddenly changed. Before the discussion came on, Mr Chamberlain had gone down to Birmingham and shown his hand. His declaration in favour of a Preferential system between the Mother Country and the Colonies, and of Retaliation against oppressive foreign Tariffs (see last Chapter), while it committed no other Member of the Cabinet to the opinions he expressed, did but deepen the obscurity as to the motives for the abandonment of the Corn Duty. Special mention was made of Canada in regard to the

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proposed policy of Preference, and if that were to be adopted the first thing to do would be to reimpose, in some form, the tax now thrown aside. Clearly, the division in the Cabinet had cut deep, and it was asserted that Mr Chamberlain had taken this new departure without asking the opinion of his colleagues as a body. This, it was said, was his reply to the abandonment of the Corn Duty.

However that may have been, he set himself at once to define his position. On the Friday following (22nd May), he unexpectedly intervened in a discussion (from which he might have absented himself without comment) on the Aged Pensioners Bill. Taunted with his failure to redeem his pledges in regard to Old Age Pensions, he declared that the scheme was by no means dead. He still hoped to carry it if the money could be provided, and provided it might be if a Duty were levied on foreign Imports. This was interpreted not merely as a re-affirmation of his previous declaration, but also as indicating roughly the scale on which he hoped that his scheme of combined Preference and Retaliation would be carried out.

The later developments of Mr Chamberlain's new policy, and the reception given to it on both sides in Parliament, must be reserved for a later Chapter. Here it is sufficient to point out the anomalous position in which it placed both Ministerialists and the Opposition with regard to the Finance Bill. On 10th June, the Amendment moved by Mr Chaplin to the Second Reading was defeated by 424 votes against 28, the minority consisting almost exclusively of convinced Protectionists. The Liberals, of course, were unable to support what they treated as a

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Protectionist Resolution, while the great bulk of the Unionist Party saw no reason for opposing Ministers on a direct Vote of Confidence, especially as Mr Balfour made it clear that any difference of opinion as to Mr Chamberlain's policy was not to be considered as "striking at the root of Party unity or loyalty." On this understanding, Ministers secured an overwhelming triumph in the Division Lobbies; the remaining stages of the Finance Bill were passed without serious difficulty, and the Third Reading was taken on 24th June. But, though Mr Balfour's tactfulness had arranged a truce, nobody believed or pretended that there was peace within the Party.

If harmony was to be restored, and a basis laid for continued co-operation between the two groups within the Cabinet, it was evidently advisable that nothing should be said or done which would exasperate personal feeling on either side, or widen the existing differences of opinion. This was recognised by the members of the Government. Those who inclined to Free Trade were ready that a full "Inquiry" should be held into the results of a system which had been on trial for more than half a century, while the advocates of "Tariff Reform" disclaimed the imputation that they were seeking to drive out of Office the colleagues who looked unfavourably or sceptically on the new Programme. But if the responsible Statesmen practised reserve and mutual forbearance, if they hoped, by postponing controversy, to avert conflict, the irresponsible agitators, the local organisers, and the pamphleteers were impatient to begin — they started without waiting for the flag. A Session which had resulted in at least an average amount

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of good legislative work was thus brought to a somewhat indecorous close. While Ministers and their supporters were acting together at Westminster, the Constituencies were being flooded with contentious leaflets, expounding and applauding, criticising and denouncing, what both sides agreed to call "Mr Chamberlain's policy."

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CHAPTER XIV

FROM THE RAID TO THE WAR

BEFORE Mr Chamberlain took office at Midsummer 1895, his predecessor, Lord Ripon, had promised to transfer the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the control of the Chartered Company. It was to protest against the completion of this arrangement that the three Chiefs Khama, Sebele, and Bathoen, had been advised to make their fateful journey to England. They arrived early in the Autumn. Mr Rhodes and his associates had long desired, for commercial as well as strategical reasons, to absorb Bechuanaland; but the Chiefs feared and disliked the Company, and, under the leadership of Khama —an able man of pronounced religious views and influential here in Missionary circles— induced the new Secretary of State to re-open their case. To hand Bechuanaland over to the Company might, it was represented, lead to a native rising, and certainly it would affront a powerful section of opinion in England, where there was a growing suspicion that the interests of the native races in South Africa were being needlessly sacrificed to gratify Mr Rhodes's ambitions. On the other hand, it had already (*i.e.*, in August) been urged by representatives of the Company (Dr Rutherfoord Harris and

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Earl Grey) that it should forthwith be given facilities for carrying the Cape railway northward to Buluwayo over the Eastern part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The Company tried to "rush" this point, but Mr Chamberlain saw no reason for hurry.

Eventually, after a close examination of the facts and arguments on both sides, Mr Chamberlain decided that each of the three Chiefs should cede the Company a strip of country, six miles wide, marching with the Transvaal border, and with this transfer of territory went the control of the Police. This, Mr Chamberlain afterwards explained, was to his mind a natural consequence, which aroused no suspicion. The Company thus gained the railway facilities which its agents professed to be working for, and the strategical point on which Mr Rhodes had set his heart, although the Protectorate was withheld. Khama and his two colleagues were thus made secure in their rights, but certain minor Chiefs, Ikaneng of the Bamalili, and Montsioa of the Bora-Tsile Baralong tribes, had already made direct concessions to the Company. Proclamations were issued carrying out these arrangements; and in November the Police of the Chartered Company were moved into the strip—much to the alarm of Khama, who still feared that the Company would seize his territory. The High Commissioner (Sir Hercules Robinson, afterwards Lord Rosmead) withdrew the Bechuanaland Border Police to Mafeking, and arranged for their transference to the Company. Dr Jameson, Administrator of the Territories of the Company, came down South, denuding Matabeleland and Mashonaland of troops, and organised the

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forces anew for his intended Raid on the Transvaal.

A glance at a map will show that, for the purposes of an invasion of the South African Republic, with Pretoria or Johannesburg for its objective, the best "jumping-off place" was the identical strip comprised in the territory ceded by Montsioa. This was so clear after the event that Mr Chamberlain's enemies, at home and abroad, declared that he must have been aware beforehand of the purpose to which his concessions would be applied—that he was privy to the Raid, an accessory before the fact.

That such a charge should be brought, and believed in, by Mr Krüger (see his *Memoirs* published by Fisher Unwin), is not surprising. But the same imputation was also made by English friends of the Boer Cause. Nor can it be denied that many patriots of the more random sort, both here and in South Africa, still consider the accusation true—and regard it as a compliment! Before dealing with the probabilities of the case, it may be as well to see what light is thrown upon it by the testimony of the persons chiefly concerned. These were Mr Chamberlain, Lord Selborne, then Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, the late Mr Fairfield, then Assistant Colonial Secretary, and Dr Harris. According to the evidence of the latter gentleman, given before the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the origin and circumstances of the Raid, he informed Mr Chamberlain that the Chartered Company, if the strip were ceded, would not stand by and see the people of Johannesburg tightly pressed if a rising were to take place there.

Mr Chamberlain, however, had no recollection whatever of such words being used to him, but he

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remembered that Dr Harris had wished to give him some confidential information. "I stopped him at once," said Mr Chamberlain, in his evidence before the Committee. "I said, 'I do not want to hear any confidential information. I am here in an official capacity. I can only hear information of which I can make official use,' and I added, 'I have Sir Hercules Robinson in South Africa.'" Lord Selborne, who was present at this interview, did not hear Dr Harris say what he told the Committee he had said to Mr Chamberlain, but clearly recollected that Dr Harris endeavoured to impart some information of a personal character, and that he was stopped in the manner which Mr Chamberlain had described to the Committee.

Dr Harris further claimed, both in cablegrams to Mr Rhodes and in his evidence before the Committee, that he had made Mr Fairfield acquainted with what was being contemplated. "I mentioned to Mr Fairfield that one of the reasons why Mr Rhodes was anxious to get the Protectorate was that he considered it imperative to have a British force on the borders, so that in the event of disturbances taking place at Johannesburg he could be in a position, if he deemed it right, to use that force in connection with it." But Mr Fairfield's letter to Mr Chamberlain describing this interview contained nothing to that effect. If Dr Harris's memory was correct, the natural inference as to Mr Fairfield is that, either he had not caught the words (he was somewhat deaf), or that they left no impression on his mind. There was nothing startling in them. The likelihood of trouble arising in Johannesburg had long been a matter of common conversation in London, and, if an outbreak should occur, it would obviously be proper

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that a British force of police should be available for protecting the lives and property of British subjects, until the Pretoria Government could step in and restore order. This, of course, was recognised as a not improbable contingency. But nobody who was aware of the scale on which the Boers had already begun to prepare for self-defence—and the Colonial Office authorities knew quite well what was being done in Pretoria—would have dreamt that any reasonable person would attempt to occupy and hold Pretoria with a few hundred Irregular Horse. A force that might be useful in dealing with a town riot—which was all that a "Johannesburg Revolution" was ever likely to be—would not naturally present itself, to the official mind in Downing Street, as an invading expedition, armed and equipped for instant action!

The question was put to the Committee—Had the Colonial Office officials at home received information that could be assumed to convey a warning of the contemplated incursion? The answer of the Committee was decisively in the negative. "Nothing in the course of the Inquiry indicating that the Colonial Office had received, either directly or indirectly, any information on the subject of the Jameson plan was forthcoming until Dr R. Harris, while giving in his evidence a description of an interview he had had at the Colonial Office on the subject of the transfer of the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the Company, said: 'It was present to my mind that, in the event of a rising at Johannesburg, Mr Rhodes wished to be in a position to render assistance with the police forces of the British South Africa Company, should certain eventualities arise. I made no explicit statement to that

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effect, but I referred to the unrest at Johannesburg, and added a guarded allusion to the desirability of there being a police force near the border. Mr Chamberlain at once demurred to the turn the conversation had taken. I never referred to the subject again at that or at either of two subsequent interviews I had with Mr Chamberlain.'

"Immediately after hearing this evidence of Dr Harris, the Secretary of State for the Colonies tendered himself as a witness, and stated what took place at the interview in question between himself, certain officials of the Colonial Office, and representatives of the British South Africa Company, with reference to the proposed transfer of the Protectorate, and concluded by stating: 'I desire to say in the most explicit manner that I had not then, and that I never had, any knowledge, or, until, I think it was, the day before the actual raid took place, the slightest suspicion of anything in the nature of a hostile or armed invasion of the Transvaal. The gentlemen who were my colleagues in office, Lord Selborne, the Under Secretary of State, and Sir Robert Meade, will be ready to speak for themselves. Mr Fairfield is dead, and the public service has lost a most honourable, loyal, devoted, and able public servant; but I say, from communications which I have had with Mr Fairfield, and with the other gentlemen named, I am convinced that they had no more suspicion than I had myself.'

"Dr Harris was subsequently further examined, and in the course of his evidence allusions were made to certain telegrams which had passed between himself, when in England, and Mr Rhodes in South Africa, and *vice versâ*, from July to November 1895. Dr Harris declined either to put in these telegrams or to authorise

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the Eastern Telegraph Company to produce them. The Eastern Telegraph Company, over whose cables the telegrams in question had passed, were thereupon ordered by the Committee to produce copies of any telegrams in their possession passing between Mr Rhodes and Dr Harris, between the 27th July and the 30th November 1895.

"On being served with this order, the Manager of the Telegraph Company attended the Committee, and declined to produce any telegrams which were in their possession, upon the ground that, by the terms of the International Convention, by which the Company were bound, the Company were prohibited from producing the copies of any telegrams, except with the consent of the senders or receivers. The Committee, after hearing counsel on behalf of the Telegraph Company in support of this objection, decided that the order of the Committee must be obeyed, and the telegrams produced.

"At a subsequent meeting of the Committee, the telegrams which had passed between the parties from the 1st November onwards were produced, the telegrams prior to that date having been destroyed in the ordinary course of business.

"It was given in evidence by Mr Hawksley that in February 1896 he went, after obtaining the authority of Mr Rhodes, to see Mr Fairfield at the Colonial Office, and informed him that communications by telegraph had passed between London and Cape Town, which had been used to support Mr Rhodes' action in South Africa.

"On receipt of this communication, Mr Fairfield, at the request of Mr Chamberlain, asked Mr Hawksley for copies, but the request was not complied with at the time, and the matter dropped.

"But in June 1896, in compliance with a further

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request from Mr Chamberlain, a copy was sent to the Colonial Office 'for confidential perusal and return,' and was accordingly returned to Mr Hawksley, who admitted that he retained it in his possession.

"The Committee called upon him to produce the telegrams, but he declined to do so, and relied upon Mr Rhodes's objection to their production when under examination. The Committee informed Mr Hawksley that their order must be obeyed; he persisted, however, in declining to produce the copy of the telegrams, and said, 'Mr Rhodes adheres to the decision he maintained when he was before the Committee in the early part of this year; and, with very great respect, I need not say I still feel that my duty compels me to act upon the instructions I have received from Mr Rhodes.'

"Thereupon Mr Chamberlain made a further statement with reference to the production of the telegrams and their general purport.

"With regard to the number of the telegrams produced to the Colonial Office by Mr Hawksley, Mr Chamberlain said: 'I know for instance that most, I do not think all, but most of the telegrams which have been already published were included in them, and there were, I know, some telegrams which were sent before the time with which these telegrams deal; but I do not think there could have been very many of them, because I was away abroad the greater part of the time, and no interviews of any sort were taking place, except between the Chartered Company and the Chiefs (they were negotiating in my absence), and it was not until I returned that the negotiations began again.'

"It would seem, therefore, that most of the

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telegrams included in the copy sent to the Colonial Office have been obtained by your Committee from the Eastern Telegraph Company. With regard to the contents of the telegrams sent to the Colonial Office, but not produced by the Eastern Telegraph Company, Mr Chamberlain said: 'Generally . . . those that were not produced are very similar in character to those that have been produced.'

"In this further statement Mr Chamberlain intimated that there was nothing in the evidence which he had heard since he first appeared as a witness, nor in the telegrams produced to the Committee, nor in those which he had seen at the Colonial Office, which caused him in any way to modify or qualify the statement he made that he had no foreknowledge of the Raid nor of the preparations for the Raid, and had given no approval to it.

"The Earl of Selborne (Under Secretary of State for the Colonies) also attended the Committee and gave similar evidence. He said, 'The fact remains that from no quarter did the Colonial Office receive any warning'; and with reference to Mr Fairfield he added, 'I have spoken of my constant communications with him (Mr Fairfield) in the autumn of 1895 prior to the Raid; after the Raid, and until he was seized with his fatal illness in the autumn of 1896, we repeatedly discussed together the events of the previous year, sometimes alone, but very often with Sir Robert Meade, and I am absolutely convinced of the fact that he had no suspicion of the plan of Dr Jameson.'

"Your Committee fully accept the statements of the Secretary of State for the Colonies and of the Under Secretary, and entirely exonerate the

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officials of the Colonial Office of having been, in any sense, cognisant of the plans which led up to the incursion of Dr Jameson's force into the South African Republic.

"It is clear from the evidence of Mr Hawksley, and his letter of 5th February 1896, that the telegrams in question conveyed the impression that the action of Mr Rhodes was known and approved at the Colonial Office.

"The fact that Mr Rhodes (after having authorised that they should be shown to Mr Chamberlain) has refused to allow them to be produced before the Committee, leads to the conclusion that he is aware that any statements purporting to implicate the Colonial Office contained in them were unfounded, and the use made of them in support of his action in South Africa was not justified."

Unfortunately, though the Committee were able to clear the reputation of Downing Street, they had to bring in a different verdict with regard to two high officials in the service of the Department in South Africa—Mr Newton, Resident Commissioner in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and Sir Graham Bower, Imperial Secretary to the High Commissioner at Cape Town. Mr Newton visited Cape Town at a time when he knew of Mr Rhodes's intention and of the real object of Dr Jameson in massing the forces of the Company on the Transvaal border. Yet he appears to have made no disclosure to Sir Hercules Robinson. Though he felt uneasiness at the possible consequences of his reticence, and discussed the question with Mr Rhodes and Sir Graham Bower, he allowed himself to be persuaded to keep silence, partly because it was "very doubtful whether anything was going to

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happen," and partly because Mr Rhodes "led him to believe that the Imperial authorities would not be averse to any movement in Johannesburg." Sir Graham Bower excused himself for making no disclosure to his Chief on the ground that Mr Rhodes had made the communication to him in confidence, and that he felt bound in honour not to inform the High Commissioner, especially as he "understood that before those troops [Dr Jameson's] were used, or any action was taken, Mr Rhodes would himself make some communication to the High Commissioner."

The value of Sir Graham's plea is for the casuists to determine. Most plain men will admit that his position was very awkward. Whether he spoke out or held his tongue he would equally be violating a clear moral law, and he had to choose which he should disregard. Obviously it was no good trying to steer a middle course by laying pressure on Mr Rhodes to abandon the project. As for the High Commissioner himself, the state of his health prevented him from giving evidence before the Select Committee, but he sent an absolute denial of any knowledge of the conspiracy. It is in the physical enfeeblement under which he appears to have been labouring at this critical time that we must find the best explanation of his not seeing or not understanding the very things for which it was his duty to be on the look-out. It is true that he may have trusted the Imperial Secretary to be his "eyes and ears." The fact is, that his appointment as High Commissioner in March 1895 had been a mistake. He was already past his days of usefulness. But Mr Rhodes had strongly urged his claims, and Lord Ripon was properly anxious to be represented at

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the Cape by an administrator in whom the Dutch felt confidence. It is possible, therefore, that Sir Hercules Robinson's sense of personal obligation to Mr Rhodes, combined with failing energy, rendered him too unsuspicious an observer of that Statesman's occasionally cryptic methods.

Though Sir Hercules Robinson was absolutely exonerated by the Committee, and though, for a brief period after the Raid, he roused himself to do strenuous and valuable work for the Crown, he cannot be relieved from the censure that attaches to any man, placed in supreme authority, who allows himself to be misled by his agents. Mr Chamberlain, we have seen, had declined to receive the private communications of Dr Harris. "I have Sir Hercules Robinson at the Cape," he said—believing, not without reason, that he might rely on his High Commissioner to keep him posted in the latest developments of South African politics. But it says much for the personal influence and reputation of Sir Hercules that even after the Raid, when every English person was more or less suspect to the Boers, he was still able to keep President Krüger's ear, and, in some degree, to guide his policy. In the false position into which the Imperial Government had been brought by Dr Jameson it is probable that no other Englishman in South Africa could have rendered such prompt and acceptable service as Sir Hercules Robinson. If he had failed to avert the trouble, he did, at least, succeed in reducing it to manageable proportions. The Boers remembered gratefully that in his previous term he had helped to negotiate the London Convention of 1884, and his unhesitating action, as soon as he

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was formally notified that Dr Jameson had crossed the frontier, was taken as proof that the chief representative of the Imperial Government was above the suspicion of complicity.

The general conclusions of the Select Committee were summed up in seven paragraphs:—

"I. Great discontent had, for some time previous to the incursion, existed in Johannesburg, arising from the grievances of the Uitlanders.

"II. Mr Rhodes occupied a great position in South Africa; he was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and, beyond all other persons, should have been careful to abstain from such a course of action as that which he adopted. As Managing Director of the British South Africa Company, as Director of the De Beers Consolidated Mines and the Gold Fields of South Africa, Mr Rhodes controlled a great combination of interests; he used his position and those interests to promote and assist his policy.

"Whatever justification there might have been for action on the part of the people of Johannesburg, there was none for the conduct of a person in Mr Rhodes's position, in subsidising, organising, and stimulating an armed insurrection against the Government of the South African Republic, and employing the forces and resources of the Chartered Company to support such a revolution. He seriously embarrassed both the Imperial and Colonial Governments, and his proceedings resulted in the invasion of the territory of a State which was in friendly relations with Her Majesty, in breach of the obligation to respect the right to Self-Government of the South African Republic under the Conventions between Her Majesty and that State. Although Dr Jameson 'went in'

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without Mr Rhodes's authority, it was always part of the plan that these forces should be used in the Transvaal in support of an insurrection. Nothing could justify such a use of such a force, and Mr Rhodes's heavy responsibility remains, although Dr Jameson at the last moment invaded the Transvaal without his direct sanction.

"III. Such a policy once embarked upon inevitably involved Mr Rhodes in grave breaches of duty to those to whom he owed allegiance. He deceived the High Commissioner representing the Imperial Government, he concealed his views from his colleagues in the Colonial Ministry, and from the Board of the British South Africa Company, and led his subordinates to believe that his plans were approved by his superiors.

"IV. Your Committee have heard the evidence of all the Directors of the British South Africa Company, with the exception of Lord Grey. Of those who were examined, Mr Beit and Mr Maguire alone had cognisance of Mr Rhodes's plans. Mr Beit played a prominent part in the negotiations with the Reform Union; he contributed large sums of money to the revolutionary movement, and must share full responsibility for the consequences.

"V. There is not the slightest evidence that the late High Commissioner in South Africa, Lord Rosmead, was made acquainted with Mr Rhodes's plans. The evidence, on the contrary, shows that there was a conspiracy to keep all information on the subject from him. The Committee must, however, express a strong opinion upon the conduct of Sir Graham Bower, who was guilty of a grave dereliction of duty in not communicating to the High Commissioner the information which

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had come to his knowledge. Mr Newton failed in his duty in a like manner.

"VI. Neither the Secretary of State for the Colonies nor any of the officials of the Colonial Office received any information which made them, or should have made them or any of them, aware of the plot during its development.

"VII. Finally, your Committee desire put on to record an absolute and unqualified condemnation of the Raid and of the plans which made it possible. The result caused for the time being grave injury to British influence in South Africa. Public confidence was shaken, race feeling embittered, and serious difficulties were created with neighbouring States."

The Committee consisted of Sir Richard Webster (now Lord Alverstone), Mr Bigham (Mr Justice Bigham), Mr Blake, Mr Sydney Buxton, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr Chamberlain, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr Cripps, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr John Ellis, Sir William Harcourt, Mr Jackson, Mr Labouchere, Mr Wharton, and Mr George Wyndham. Mr Jackson (now Lord Allerton) was chairman.

Mr Labouchere presented a separate Report, for which he alone voted. After an exhaustive analysis of the evidence, which gives a lucid, though biassed, account of the conspiracy, the raid, and the Johannesburg rising, he formulated twenty-six elaborate conclusions. Shortly put, his view was that, though the grievances of the Uitlanders had a certain basis, they were greatly exaggerated; that Mr Rhodes deceived the Johannesburghers by leading them to believe that the High Commissioner was cognisant of his plans; that the object of the conspiracy was a sordid one — that the chief

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conspirators, from Mr Rhodes downwards, were strongly influenced by financial considerations of a personal character; and that Mr Rhodes and Mr Beit deserved severe punishment. The last three paragraphs of Mr Labouchere's conclusions should, perhaps, be quoted, because, though unsupported by any other member of the Committee, they show that even Mr Labouchere did not, on the evidence before the Committee, suggest that Mr Chamberlain had any foreknowledge of the conspiracy:—

"Sir John Willoughby, and other officers of Her Majesty's Army serving under him as Commander of the forces of the Chartered Company, took part in the Raid. For this they have suffered imprisonment, and have been deprived of their commissions. It would appear by the evidence submitted to your Committee, that these gentlemen had grounds for their belief in the statement made to them that the Raid was undertaken with the knowledge and approval of the Imperial authorities. Under these circumstances, your Committee is of opinion that their punishment has exceeded their fault, and that it would be only consistent with justice that their commissions, which have been taken from them, should be restored to them.

"This will be all the more proper, if Mr Rhodes and Mr Beit, who were the originators, the financiers, and the most active promoters of the Jameson plan, are to escape all criminal proceedings. Your Committee, however, is of opinion that they merit severe punishment. Mr Rhodes is a Privy Councillor, he was Cape Premier, and he was the autocrat of Rhodesia, when the conspiracy that your Committee has investigated was in preparation, and when it was

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sought to carry it out. He deceived his Sovereign, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioner of South Africa, the Governor of the Cape Colony, his colleagues in the Cape Cabinet, the board of the Chartered Company, and the very persons whom he used as his instruments in his nefarious designs; and he abused the high positions which he held by engaging in a conspiracy, in the success of which his own pecuniary interests were largely involved; thus inflicting a slur on the hitherto unblemished honour of our public men at home and in our Colonies. Mr Beit is a German subject. In conjunction with Mr Rhodes, he fomented a revolution in a State in amity with us, and promoted an invasion of that State from British territory. These two men, the one a British Statesman, the other a financier of German nationality, disgraced the good name of England, which it ought to be the object of all Englishmen to maintain pure and undefiled. One of the witnesses compared the Jameson plan to the expedition of William of Orange, when he landed in England. Another witness compared it to the recent uprising of the Cretans against the sovereignty of the Sultan of Turkey in their island. With these it had no analogy. It was one of the most disgraceful episodes in our country's history, and your Committee emphatically declares that it deserves the severest reprobation.

"Whilst your Committee is of opinion that the evidence placed before it in no way shows that the Colonial Office, when ceding to the Chartered Company a strip of the Bechuanaland Protectorate abutting on the Transvaal frontier, and handing over to the Company the police of

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the Bechuanaland Crown Colony, on that Colony being made over to the Cape Colony, was aware that Mr Rhodes contemplated under any contingencies using this strip and these police to invade the Transvaal, in order to afford aid to the Johannesburghers in any revolutionary outbreak, it regrets that the alleged complicity of the Colonial Office has not been probed to the bottom, because the slightest appearance of any indisposition to do this by your Committee may lead some persons erroneously to suppose that there may be some truth in the statements of witnesses connected with the Jameson plan, that the secret aims of Mr Rhodes were more or less clearly revealed to Mr Chamberlain and to Mr Fairfield, and that Mr Pope, Q.C., when addressing your Committee as counsel for Mr Rhodes, was justified in suggesting in the following passage of his speech, that, for State reasons, either Mr Rhodes had rightly kept back information in regard to this alleged complicity, or that your Committee had rightly not wished to obtain it: 'He dared say that the instincts of political sport might lead one to desire that somewhat mysterious scent should be followed up, and something unearthed which had not reached the Committee. He did not know whether such things existed or not; but supposing the policy were pursued, and they were to hunt where they could, what would happen? Suppose it turned out that the suspicions were true? Would it tend to the interests of Her Majesty's services or to the reputation of the country? There might be something that was even beyond Party spirit. There might be a desire to see the services of his country maintained with honour and integrity, and there might be a desire that

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the reputation of this country should not suffer by idle and unnecessary calumnies being circulated against any one.'"

The Report of the Committee was published on 13th July 1897. On the 15th, Mr Balfour was asked to set apart a day for discussing it. He replied that he saw no useful purpose to be served by Debate; and as the official Opposition offered no protest it was inferred that an understanding on the subject had been reached between the two Front Benches. The Radicals, however, were not to be thwarted in their purpose. On the 16th, Sir Wilfrid Lawson asked whether the Government meant to take any action on the Report. Mr Balfour replied that the Government were considering the future administration of Rhodesia. Then Mr Labouchere raised a question of Privilege in connection with Mr Hawksley's refusal to produce the telegrams to the Committee, and wished to move that he be brought up to the Bar of the House. The Speaker, however, ruled that it was not a case of Privilege, inasmuch as the Committee had not made a Special Report with a view to action being taken by the House. When the Colonial Office vote came up for discussion on the 19th, a Unionist member, who has since joined the Administration (Mr Arnold-Forster), took occasion to condemn the conduct of Mr Rhodes and the Chartered Company. Mr Balfour, in his reply, indignantly denied that there was "a conspiracy of silence" for the purpose of burking discussion on the Report, and sharply criticised Mr Arnold-Forster for a speech which he regarded as full of insinuations, innuendoes, and half-developed accusations. A day would, he said, certainly have been given

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had a demand been made by the front Opposition bench or by any considerable section of the House. Thereupon, Sir William Harcourt—who seems to have thought it imprudent to allow the Radical wing of his party to pursue any longer an independent course that might lead to an open rupture in his Party—suggested that Mr Balfour should agree to a discussion. On 26th July, accordingly, Mr Philip Stanhope brought forward the following Resolution :—

"That the House regrets the inconclusive action and Report of the Select Committee in British South Africa, and especially the failure of that Committee to recommend specific steps with regard to Mr Rhodes, and to immediately report to the House the refusal of Mr Hawksley to obey the order of the Committee to produce copies of certain telegrams which he admitted were in his possession, and which he had already submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies at his request in July 1896; that Mr Hawksley be ordered to attend at the Bar of the House upon a day appointed for the purpose, and then and there produce the aforesaid telegrams."

This invitation to Sir William Harcourt and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to condemn a Report of which they were part authors and co-signatories produced a piquant situation. Mr Stanhope's speech was directed against what he regarded as a compact of silence in influential quarters. Mr Labouchere delivered a strong attack upon Mr Rhodes and the Colonial Office, though, as appears in his Draft Report, he had to acquit Mr Chamberlain of foreknowledge of the Raid. Sir M. Hicks-Beach made a vigorous reply to Mr Labouchere, offered as good a defence of Mr Rhodes as the circumstances permitted,

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and resented the blowing of gigantic bubbles on the subject of the alleged complicity of the Colonial Office. Sir William Harcourt followed the lead of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, defending the findings of the Committee on all points, upholding Mr Chamberlain's denial of foreknowledge, and, generally, repudiating the terms of the Resolution. The Radicals—who regarded this as evidence that the Front Bench Liberals intended to assist the Ministry in screening Mr Rhodes and the Colonial Office from further investigation—then offered to eliminate from the Resolution the proposed censure on the Committee, and confine it to ordering the attendance of Mr Hawksley at the Bar.

Mr Balfour, however, insisted that the House should decide upon the Resolution as it stood. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman minimised the importance of the missing telegrams, and then Mr Chamberlain made the speech of the night. He was in excellent debating form, rejoicing in the opportunity to deal with the rumours and insinuations with which he had been assailed during the preceding eighteen months. His answer to them was, he contended, to be found in his action as soon as the Raid became known. He dismissed as ridiculous the attempt to delude the public into the belief that there was some damnatory secret in the missing telegrams. They had been sent to him confidentially; he had read them, and he had returned them, taking good care to say that, so far as he was concerned, he had no objection whatever to their being published. Coming to the question of Mr Rhodes's conduct, he asserted that, while the fault of Mr Rhodes was about as great a fault

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as a politician or Statesman could commit, there existed nothing which affected his personal character as a man of honour. This bold and unexpected declaration raised a strong protest among the Radicals, in which some of the Unionists joined, but the House was in no mood for further discussion. On a Division being taken the Resolution was defeated by 304 votes to 77.

The certificate of character, as it was called, which Mr Chamberlain thus gave to Mr Rhodes was not, perhaps, very happily worded, since it proved liable to misconstruction. Yet in view of the circumstances under which the expression was used it was no more than was due to Mr Rhodes. It must be remembered that at this time one of the most frequent imputations against him was that his political plot against the South African Republic had been formed for the purpose of putting money into the pockets of himself and his commercial associates. It was alleged, quite plainly—as, *e.g.*, by Mr Labouchere in his Draft Report — that Mr Rhodes had abused his position as Premier of Cape Colony to promote the interest of the Chartered Company and other speculative undertakings in which he was concerned — that his crime was, in fact, a selfish and sordid one. This was the charge that Mr Chamberlain repudiated, though he condemned both the object which Mr Rhodes had aimed at and the curiously tortuous methods by which he sought to attain it.

How far it is logically possible, or morally defensible, to exclude ordinary ethical rules from the estimate of a man's public conduct is a point on which the most philosophical historians are by no means in accord. The

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prevailing tendency is towards judgment by results. The men who succeed—Sulla, Cæsar, Charlemagne, Bismarck — are labelled white, and their faults are explained away. Those who fail—the first and the third Napoleon—are marked black. Those whose triumph is incomplete or posthumous—Parnell and Rhodes—go down piebald to posterity, and their admirers must be content if strict justice is done to their careers. But it was justice, and no more, that Mr Rhodes should be vindicated in public from a sin of which he had not been guilty, and it was appropriate that the acquittal should be pronounced by the Statesman who condemned his other faults. That Mr Chamberlain used such strong language in exculpation was due, in part, to the virulence of the accusations which he repelled, and partly to the vivid colours in which he always presents the impression or feeling of the moment.

It was used against him, of course—perhaps, he knew it would be. But it is not in his nature to avoid attack, so confident is he in his power of giving a good account of his adversaries. It is not so easy to say why he and his colleagues on the Committee exposed themselves to needless and very damaging misrepresentations in the matter of the "missing telegrams." When in the end they were published in a Belgian newspaper they contained nothing that was in the least degree compromising either to the Colonial Secretary or his assistants in Downing Street. What they proved was, not that the Imperial Government had been privy to the conspiracy, but that Mr Rhodes and some of those who were working with him wished it to be given out—confidentially—to their subordinate agents that

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this was the case. *Connu!* As much as this was put in record in the Committee's Report. But if the text of the documents be examined (*see* Appendix V.) it will be equally clear that the agents of the plot in England represented—and perhaps believed—that no difficulty would be made by the Colonial Office, and that they had no kind of warrant for the suggestion, whether they made it recklessly or in good faith. To use a man's statement against himself is an accepted practice in English law, but to treat as evidence the veiled and uncorroborated suggestions of somebody else, who has an obvious motive for making the imputation, is absolutely unheard-of. There are, it is true —or were—other "missing telegrams" besides those which were eventually published through Dr Leyds. What has become of them? If there had been anything at all damning in them they would have been produced long ago —unless "the mice have eaten them!"

Why was it, then, that the Committee, almost unanimously, gave up their demand for the production of documents to which so much importance was attached? The "missing telegrams" had nothing to do with it. The truth was that, rightly or wrongly, the Committee, at a certain point, became convinced that the inquiry was going too far. They must not drive Mr Rhodes and his associates into a corner from which they could only escape by a full statement of their defence. The Committee, however, were not influenced by any fear of the Imperial Government or the Colonial Office being implicated in possible revelations. Sir William Harcourt and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman are not ungenerous politicians, but they could not, humanly,

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be expected to throw away the chance of discrediting a Government and disgracing a Minister whose principles they honestly detested. Still less would they have displayed this singular magnanimity—which, on public grounds, would have been highly culpable—when they were well aware that by limiting the inquiry they were offending many of their most active supporters, and damaging their personal influence in the Party. Their motives were very different.

Though Sir William Harcourt and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman are not men who would throw away a legitimate advantage, the severest critic of some of their public speeches will cheerfully admit that, in their hearts, and according to their views of public policy, they are as patriotic as any Unionist or Imperialist in Parliament. They agreed to cut the investigation short, because they accepted Mr Rhodes's statement that he had been "greatly influenced" by his belief that the policy of the Transvaal Government was to "introduce the influence of another Foreign Power into the already complicated system of South Africa, and thereby render more difficult in the future the closer union of the different States." That was, in fact, the key of the whole position—the long intrigue between Boers and Germans. It is no secret now that Mr Krüger and his Hollander advisers hoped to obtain the active assistance of Germany in driving the British out of South Africa, and that Germany had held out expectations which were only prevented from being carried into effect by the tact and prudence of the British Government and the wholesome respect inspired by the British Navy. All this Mr Rhodes knew,

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and he was quite capable, if pressed too hard, of blurting out the naked truth.

Nothing could have been more inconvenient for us than to have these foreign intrigues exposed before an authoritative English tribunal. To fasten a public charge of treachery on a "friendly" Government is to stir up angry feeling between the two peoples even if it does not lead to a declaration of War. In the middle of the year 1897 our hands were still full of unsettled questions. Lord Salisbury's patient Diplomacy had not yet succeeded in clearing the ground and isolating the Transvaal difficulty, so that when the time should come we might deal finally and effectively with the trouble that was slowly but quite surely coming to a head in South Africa.

The charge of complicity in the Raid—though revived against Mr Chamberlain after the publication of the "missing telegrams" in January 1900—has been dropt by those who were most strenuous in bringing it forward. In its place, we are told that Mr Chamberlain, Mr Rhodes, and Dr Jameson calculated "that a very little extraneous support would enable the Liberal Party in the Transvaal, aided by the Uitlanders, to overturn the Government of Paul Krüger, when the intervention of the High Commissioner would be invoked, and a plebiscite would be taken which would transfer the control of the Transvaal Republic from the hands of the Tories of the Krüger school to those of the Liberals, who were quite prepared to march with the times and readjust the institutions of the Transvaal to the necessities of the Modern State. Everything miscarried owing to the unfortunate invasion of Dr Jameson, but if that had never taken place

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there was a good prospect of a beneficient Revolution being carried through in the Transvaal, which would have had the enormous advantage of placing the control of the South African Republic in the hands of the majority of the adult male population of the country." The plan failed, we are told, because Mr Chamberlain forced the Union Jack upon the promoters of the intended Revolution, and because Dr Jameson's advance was precipitated by "messages from people in communication with the Colonial Office."

The drawback to this theory is that all the evidence in support of it would also support the charge of complicity in the Raid—and this has been given up. The negotiations with Dr Harris, the interviews with a lady journalist, the exchange of telegrams between these agents and their principal in South Africa—these are the only proved facts. But we are told "that in the engineering of the Revolutionary Campaign the introduction of the Flag was the one fatal mistake." This, it is said, was due to pressure brought to bear on Mr Rhodes—brought to bear on him by his emissaries, who had been in communication with Mr Chamberlain! Therefore it was Mr Chamberlain who applied the pressure! But why? What would be gained by mixing up the British authorities in a dangerous and shady plot when the Krüger régime might as easily be upset by a movement under the Transvaal Flag? With what sort of face could the British Government have intervened if they were known to have taken part in a conspiracy against the legitimate authority at Pretoria? If they had acknowledged their complicity, their moral case—their justification before public opinion in this country and abroad—would be

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gone. If, on the other hand, they disowned their confederates, and repudiated the employment of the Union Jack, what would be the good of having secretly sanctioned its use? On either alternative the British Government would be placed at a gratuitous disadvantage. Mr Chamberlain is not the man to play pitch-and-toss on the principle of "heads you win and tails I lose."

The fact was—and the Correspondence produced before the Committee suggests it—that the use of the British Flag was recommended by Mr Rhodes's agents. On 26th November, Dr Harris telegraphed as follows: "Great danger Phillips Leonard can or may be doing business without assistance British South African Company and also independently British flag it would have serious effect your position here. I say this very confidential." This is sufficiently explicit. The conspirators acting with Mr Rhodes did not trust the conspirators in Johannesburg. This was subsequently shown by the recriminations which broke out after the failure of the Raid, but which were so promptly and discreetly cut short. Already, as we see, Dr Harris had his doubts of the Reform Leaders, many of whom had other interests than those of the Chartered Company, and some of whom were either not Englishmen at all or Englishmen of that cosmopolitan financial order which has no special affection for the British or any other Flag. It was to force their hand that Dr Harris so strongly recommended the use of the Union Jack, and added that this expedient might influence English opinion in favour of Mr Rhodes. A plot in the interests of the Chartered Company would not specially commend itself to

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patriotic sentiment. But a bold stroke for the British Flag—at worst, it would be a noble error.

It was shrewd advice, but we cannot say what effect it had on Mr Rhodes's mind. He may have preferred to believe in the Reform Party at Johannesburg, with some of whom he was intimately associated, and he may not have thought it worth while to arrange for conciliating public opinion at home. He was, we know, somewhat contemptuous of the "unctuous rectitude" of the British public. However that may have been, it was considered advisable to strengthen the case for using the British Flag. Accordingly, Miss Flora Shaw (Lady Lugard) telegraphed on 17th December, that she had recently had an interview with the Secretary of the Transvaal, who had just left for The Hague, Paris, and Berlin, and she feared that he was "in negotiation with these parties." This would appeal to what Mr Rhodes admitted was his governing motive—his apprehension that the influence of "another Foreign Power" might be introduced into South African politics. This danger he attempted to forestall by insisting in the British Flag. Hence the misunderstanding between the two sets of conspirators, the Rhodes Party and the Raid Party, and hence one of the many causes of the failure of the Jameson Raid.

The last sentences of Miss Shaw's telegram of 17th December, that "Mr Chamberlain was sound in the case of interference by European Powers," and that she had special reasons for believing that he "wishes you must do it immediately," were, the one a natural inference from Mr Chamberlain's known characteristics, and the other a diplomatic incentive to the course which she was recommending.

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There were, then, plenty of strong reasons why Mr Rhodes should take the course which he actually followed—none why Mr Chamberlain should lend himself to such an adventure. His attempt to recall Dr Jameson, his condemnation of the Raid, and his concurrence in the punishment of the chief agents—these official actions might, conceivably, have been acquiesced in by confederates who had to pay the penalty for their blunder. It might have been part of the arrangement that the chief conspirator should not be unmasked. But even that fantastic theory would not explain how he should be permitted, not merely to protect himself, but to initiate and carry out the strong measures which were afterwards adopted with regard to the Chartered Company.

We may take it, then, as established, by the overwhelming balance of probabilities on one side, and by the complete absence of direct evidence on the other, that Mr Chamberlain was privy neither to the Jameson Raid nor the "Jameson Plan." This inference is borne out by the fact that on his first assumption of office he was animated by friendly feelings towards Mr Krüger. He hoped and believed that with proper handling the hitherto intractable President might be brought to a reasonable frame of mind. The trouble that was brewing in the Transvaal was not made by Mr Chamberlain. His original purpose was to calm the existing irritation, and reach an equitable compromise. How bad the state of affairs was at Midsummer 1895 may be seen from a brief retrospect.

The contest for the Presidency of the South African Republic, in 1893, had turned chiefly on the policy to be followed with regard to the

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foreign settlers in the Rand; and the election of Mr Krüger by a narrow majority (the figures being keenly challenged by General Joubert's supporters), marked the success of the anti-British Party. The "commandeering" of Englishmen for service in the Boer Militia led to the intervention of the High Commissioner, Sir Henry (the late Lord) Loch. The law enforcing Military service was modified by the Volksraad, but on his paying a visit to the President at Pretoria, in 1894, "the English behaved in the most disorderly fashion." "As soon as the Governor and I were seated in the carriage," so the ex-President records in his *Memoirs*, "the Jingoes took out the horses and drew us to the Transvaal Hotel, singing the usual English satirical ditties as they did so. One of the ringleaders jumped on the box waving a great Union Jack. On arriving in front of the Transvaal Hotel they stopped the carriage and read an Address to Sir Henry Loch. A number of Transvaal Burghers, seeing what was going on, drew the carriage, on which I had remained seated alone, to the Government Buildings. I need not say that the incident made a very bad impression on the minds of the Burghers, and added new fuel to the already existing dislike of the English." The Volksraad asked the Government why so offensive an exhibition had not been prevented, and in order that such insults should not be repeated a number of Burghers assembled in the town.

But the National Union, we are informed on the same authority, thought it would be easier to provoke a riot in Johannesburg, and invited Sir Henry to visit them there. This proposal, at Mr Krüger's request, he declined. "His whole public attitude was, in fact, perfectly correct.

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But how did he act in secret?" The Address of the National Union was sent to Johannesburg, and it contained "the most insulting accusations" against the Transvaal authorities. "In public, Sir Henry advised the Deputation to carry their complaints quietly before the Volksraad. In secret, he asked them how many rifles and how much ammunition they had in Johannesburg, and how long they could hold out against the Government until he was able to come to their assistance with troops from outside."

How typically English, the ex-President exclaims, was this conduct on the part of a high-placed British official. It was characteristic of the entire English policy in South Africa! His account of this affair is substantially accurate, except, no doubt, in the gloss he puts upon the High Commissioner's confidential advice to the Reform Leaders, which, as Lord Loch explained subsequently in the House of Lords, was intended to make them realise that their military position was quite untenable. This, apparently, was not the impression left on the mind of Mr Lionel Phillips. But there is no need here to discuss the merits or demerits of the Reform Leaders or the real significance of Lord Loch's inquiry. The only purpose of this reference to the affair is to show that the quarrel between British and Boers was one of old standing and gradually increasing bitterness. Whether it might have been mitigated if the control of Transvaal affairs had fallen into the hands of General Joubert, it is impossible to say. But the grievances of the Uitlanders, practical and sentimental, had engaged the attention of the Colonial Office long before the Jameson Raid. They were not discovered and exploited by Mr Chamberlain.

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Redress was demanded by Lord Ripon in language quite as strong as Mr Chamberlain afterwards employed, and by the irony of politics it happened that the least aggressive of Liberal Statesmen gave deeper offence than any of his predecessors to Mr Krüger. The cession of Swaziland to the South African Republic, resisted by the natives, had been carried out in deference to the general opinion of the Party then in power here, and, it should be added, in the hope of showing our goodwill to the Boers. "We had hardly time to breathe," President Krüger remarks, "after these difficulties about the native territories when England suddenly annexed Sambaanland and Umbigesaland." It had always been intended, he explains, to claim these tracts as soon as the Swaziland question had been settled. "The object of this proceeding," he goes on, "can only have been to vex and harass the Republic; for by acting as she did, England cut off the Transvaal's last outlet to the sea, an outlet which England did not require. It goes without saying that the Republic protested against the annexation; but England did not trouble herself about it."

This little masterpiece of Imperial policy, so quietly executed by the Colonial Office, practically wiped out the worst effects of the Swaziland Convention. It was never forgiven by the Boers, though at the time it attracted little notice at home. By keeping the Boers away from the sea, and cutting them off from foreign reinforcements, it saved South Africa for the British, or, at least, saved us from having to employ a large naval force in watching the enemy's coast. It is, however, not necessary to quote further passages from Mr Krüger's book,

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or to dwell at length on the bad feeling that prevailed between 1893 and 1895. It is no secret that matters had reached so serious a pass, that not only was the possibility of war considered by Lord Rosebery's Cabinet, but a distinguished General was invited to attend a special meeting of Ministers, and explain his views as to the force that would be required, and the strategy that should be followed, in attempting the reconquest of the Transvaal.

The policy, then, that Mr Chamberlain pursued with regard to the Transvaal was not a new departure invented by himself. He simply followed the lines laid down by his predecessor, though, of course, he threw fresh spirit and energy into the never-ending never-advancing negotiations. His object and firm intention was to obtain a tolerable status for the Uitlanders in the Transvaal—hoping to succeed where Lord Ripon had failed, and determined not to be put off with Diplomatic excuses and sham concessions. So far as he had yet shaped in his mind a further policy—he had only been in office a few weeks when the crisis began—it was to work gradually for a Federation of all South African States, under the British Flag, but each to retain absolute Independence in all internal matters—a Federation that would, by common agreement, bring the Customs and Railways into a single system, but lead to no other change in existing institutions, whether British or Dutch. Even this ideal he was in no hurry to realise, and would have been well content to leave the development of his scheme to the natural operation of political and commercial influences, if only President Krüger would deal in a conciliatory spirit with the

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more urgent claims of the British in the Transvaal.

Almost the first official act of the new Colonial Secretary in regard to South Africa was to congratulate the President of the Transvaal upon the opening of the railway from Pretoria to Delagoa Bay — which, Mr Krüger tells us, had been one of his fondest wishes — and to express, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, the most friendly feelings towards the Government and people of the South African Republic. This was no mere verbal courtesy, but the statement of a policy and the declaration of a hope for the future. Unfortunately, Mr Krüger acted as though he did not care a pin's point whether friendly feelings continued or not. In order to develop the traffic on the Eastern line, he entered upon a war of rates with the Cape line to Pretoria, imposing prohibitory tariffs upon the fifty-mile section from the Vaal River to Johannesburg. The Cape Government was thus checked in developing the carrying trade to the mines, but, as the distance from the Vaal River drifts by road was only about thirty miles, goods were unloaded on the Orange side of the river, and thence forwarded across the Transvaal by ox-waggon. Mr Krüger, thereupon (August 1895), issued a Proclamation closing the Drifts—a clear breach of the London Convention which gave all persons, other than natives, full liberty to enter and carry on commerce within the Republic.

The Proclamation brought about a crisis which Mr Chamberlain handled with equal vigour and caution. First he assured himself of support from the Cape Government. He was willing to remonstrate with Mr Krüger, pro-

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vided they would not draw back—and remonstrance might mean War. If Her Majesty's Government insisted on the withdrawal of the Proclamation, they could not drop their demand "until they have obtained a compliance . . . even if it should be necessary to undertake an Expedition." Hence he required a "most explicit undertaking in writing" that the Cape Government would bear half the gross cost, furnish a fair contingent of the fighting force, and give the free use of the railways and rolling stock for military purposes. The Cape Government accepted these terms, which were kept secret from the public at the time, and Mr Chamberlain, thereupon, launched an Ultimatum, describing the closing of the Drifts as an "unfriendly action" which called for the "gravest remonstrances," and asking for the Proclamation to be cancelled.

Mr Krüger considered that the time was not ripe for fighting. Mr Rhodes, then Premier of Cape Colony, had the Bond Party with him at the Cape; and the Dutch there were as deeply interested as the British in the question of free commercial access to the Transvaal. To provoke a quarrel on this issue would have alienated the Afrikander population by whose aid, as events were to prove, Mr Krüger hoped to establish Dutch supremacy throughout South Africa. He, therefore, gave way, and the Drifts were re-opened on 5th November. Not until two years later was it known outside official circles how near we had been to War—how resolutely Mr Chamberlain, within three months of taking charge of Colonial affairs, had grasped the South African nettle.

Mr Krüger's failure entailed disastrous con-

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sequences on the Uitlanders, upon whom his hand was now laid with ever-increasing heaviness. The Raid and its immediate consequences had more or less hampered Mr Chamberlain's policy, though he did his best to repair the mischief. No sooner did he learn that Dr Jameson had crossed the border than, without waiting to consult his colleagues, he sent peremptory telegrams to Sir Hercules Robinson, Mr Rhodes, and Dr Jameson, ordering the expedition to turn back. This was ignored. The surrender at Dornkoop had been conditional upon the lives of the Raiders being spared, but, as all the prisoners were in gaol, this part of the arrangement was concealed by Mr Krüger, who—cleverly enough—used it to secure the submission of Johannesburg, whose inhabitants were given to understand that the lives of Dr Jameson and his associates depended upon the unconditional capitulation of the town.

Sir Hercules Robinson arrived at Pretoria on 4th January 1896, and was instructed by Mr Chamberlain to secure the release of the Raiders on the pledge that the leaders would be brought to trial in England. Mr Krüger played with this question, insisting that all the Raiders should be tried, and not the officers alone, and threatening, if this demand were not complied with, that he would have the whole body tried in Pretoria. Mr Chamberlain, however, pressed his claim, and the prisoners were handed over to Great Britain. Thereupon, Mr Chamberlain telegraphed to Mr Krüger: "This act will redound to the credit of your Honour, and will conduce to the peace of South Africa, and to the harmonious co-operation of the British and Dutch races,

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which is necessary for its future development and prosperity."

But much blood had to be spilt before such co-operation became even tentatively possible. Mr Krüger was determined to use the Raid as a means by which to secure the abrogation of the London Convention; and the famous telegram from the German Emperor naturally led him to believe, the British flying squadron notwithstanding, that if War were to ensue Germany would intervene to prevent the extinction of the Republic. Mr Chamberlain was equally determined to obtain a settlement upon equitable and honourable lines. In this course, however, he was not seconded by Sir Hercules Robinson. When, on 7th January, he suggested that Sir Hercules should send immediately "a large force, including cavalry and artillery, to the Cape to provide for all eventualities," the High Commissioner objected. He thought President Krüger had behaved very well, public excitement was now allayed, and the despatch of troops would but revive it. Nor was this the only point upon which he thwarted the Colonial Secretary. He took no effective steps to bring Mr Krüger to reason upon the fundamental grievance of which the Raid and the Johannesburg Insurrection had been but the outward symptoms. At any rate, he contented himself with accepting Mr Krüger's assurances.

Meanwhile Mr Chamberlain was bombarding him with telegrams urging him to obtain radical reforms. Sir Hercules, it has been explained, was in indifferent health, and on that account alone, unfit to grapple with so strong a man as Mr Krüger. He left Pretoria as soon

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as he could, satisfied apparently with the transference of the Raiders to the British authorities. In vain Mr Chamberlain inquired what was being done on the larger political matters which were at the root of the trouble. He did not agree with Sir Hercules that the time was inopportune to thresh them out, nor did he see much practical value in the President's general assurances. "The people of Johannesburg," he telegraphed, "laid down their arms in the belief that reasonable concessions would be arranged by your intervention; and until these are granted, or are definitely promised to you by the President, the root causes of the recent troubles will remain. The President has again and again promised reform, and especially on 30th December last, when he promised reforms in education and the franchise; and grave dissatisfaction will be excited if you leave Pretoria without a clear understanding on these points.

"Her Majesty's Government invite President Krüger, in the interests of the South African Republic and of Peace, to make a clear declaration on these matters. . . . It will be your duty to use firm language, and to tell the President that neglect to meet the admitted grievances of the Uitlanders, by giving a definite promise to propose reasonable concessions, will have a disastrous effect upon the prospects of a lasting and satisfactory settlement."

Sir Hercules put that instruction in his pocket, and while on his way back to Capetown acquainted Mr Chamberlain with his excuses for disregarding it. The time was not opportune to acquaint the President with its terms. The leading men in Johannesburg were in gaol on a charge of treason; there were rumours of a long-standing and widespread conspiracy to overturn the Pre-

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sident's Government and incorporate the Transvaal in the territory of the British South Africa Company; these stories would be tested in the Boer Courts; "and, meanwhile, to urge claims for extended political privileges for the very men so charged would be ineffectual and impolitic." Mr Chamberlain dealt with these excuses as tenderly as regard for Sir Hercules Robinson's distinguished past services and present difficulties permitted, and instructed him to resume discussions with the President. But with an unwilling agent he found himself powerless. Pending the trials of the Johannesburg Reformers, Sir Hercules, though not directly refusing to act, showed that his heart was no longer in his task. He would act later, he said, but "the present moment is most inopportune, as the strongest feeling of irritation and indignation against the Uitlanders exists. . . . Any attempt to dictate in regard to the internal affairs of the South African Republic at this moment would be resisted by all Parties in South Africa, and would do great harm."

For the time Mr Chamberlain was checked, not beaten. Throughout the crisis he was equally rapid in action and cool in deliberation. The opinion of foreign countries troubled him not at all. At a banquet given to the new Governor of Queensland on 21st January, he minimised the importance of recent "sensational occurrences" which would leave little trace behind them. Taking up the phrase "splendid isolation," he declared that the attitude of Great Britain had attracted instead of repelling the loyalty of the Great Colonies, whatever offence it might have given to the Continental Powers. On the 24th, at Birmingham, he devoted the greater part of a speech to his constituents to other topics than

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South Africa, though he expressed his hope that matters were settling down in the Transvaal, and intimated that the just demands of the Uitlanders would not be forgotten. Their discontent could be removed, he said, without danger to the Independence of the Republic. But it was an anomaly which could not endure that the majority in the population, the contributors of nine-tenths of the Revenue, should have no voice in the government of the State.

On 4th February 1896, Mr Rhodes arrived in London to carry out his intention of "facing the music." He had one interview with Mr Chamberlain at the Colonial Office, and on the 9th sailed for South Africa. His abrupt departure was accepted as a clear intimation that the Imperial Government did not require, and would not accept, his advice or assistance, and intended to deal in its own manner with the political and military privileges of the Chartered Company.

On 7th February, the eve of the meeting of Parliament, Mr Chamberlain published in the *London Gazette* a Despatch to Mr Krüger—before it could have reached Pretoria. In this document he disposed of the suspicions that the British Government had any foreknowledge of the conspiracy and the Raid, and made it clear that he had been misled by the Chartered Company into granting the Bechuanaland strip. Drawing a distinction between the mass of Johannesburghers and the few then in Boer prisons awaiting trial for high treason, he defined the relations of the Boer Republic to the Suzerain Power under the Conventions, recapitulated the grievances of the Uitlanders, and suggested for a settlement that the

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President should give a modified local autonomy to the Rand, with powers of legislation and taxation subject to the President's Veto and to the payment of an annual tribute to the Republic; and he concluded by saying he would be glad to have an opportunity of discussing the subject with Mr Krüger "if it suited his convenience, and if he were agreeable to come to this country for the purpose."

The "New Diplomacy"—the unconventionality of publishing a Despatch in London before it could reach the person to whom it was addressed—displeased Mr Krüger, who loftily rebuked Mr Chamberlain for his disregard of etiquette. But he inquired whether, if he should visit England, the question of Article 4 of the Convention—the Article reserving to Great Britain the control of the Foreign relations of the Republic—would be included in the topics for discussion. On being firmly but politely told that it would not, he found a variety of reasons for staying in Pretoria and declining to discuss that or any other question in London. Mr Chamberlain exhausted the arts of solicitude for the personal health and welfare of the President and Mrs Krüger (who was ailing at the time), but the stolid old Dutchman was not to be moved. Astute Diplomatist as he was, he affected an air of moderation, and appointed a Commission to inquire into the condition of the mining industry. Mr Chamberlain could do nothing but impress on him the wisdom of taking measures to avert any renewal of the late troubles. Mr Krüger, however, was unwilling to accept advice from the Colonial Office, which he firmly believed to have been in complicity with Mr Rhodes and the Reformers, and naturally regarded as a tainted source.

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In these circumstances Mr Chamberlain bided his time, replacing Sir Jacobus de Wet, who had not been successful as British Resident at Pretoria, with an experienced Diplomatist, Mr (now Sir) Conyngham Greene. Sir Hercules Robinson was not destined long to remain in South Africa as a passive obstacle to Mr Chamberlain's policy of continuous, though pacific, pressure upon Mr Krüger. His health unhappily grew worse, and at the close of 1896 he came home. Mr Chamberlain found in Sir Alfred Milner a younger and stronger man, who was destined as High Commissioner to discharge successfully responsibilities which had outgrown the strength and capacity of his predecessor.

Every month the situation became more serious. An offensive and defensive alliance was concluded between the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, and within the Transvaal money was being lavishly spent on armaments and munitions. Whether the President wanted War or did not, it must be admitted that he went the right way to work to pick a quarrel with the Suzerain Power. He passed an Aliens Bill, which was a distinct breach of the Conventions, inasmuch as it restricted the right of free entry and residence of British subjects, and he boldly contended that the Republic had the same power of exclusion as any other State. He showed his contempt for the Conventions by neglecting to inform the Imperial Government of his Treaty negotiations with Foreign Powers, and he presented an absurd bill for damages, on account of the Raid, which was in itself a sufficient revelation of his provocative temper. He demanded £667,938, 3s. 3d. for "material damages," and £1,000,000 for the

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"intellectual and moral damages," which the Republic was supposed to have suffered. Even Lord Rosmead (Sir Hercules Robinson) was astounded at His Honour's effrontery. Mr Chamberlain dealt coolly with the claim, remarking that he did not feel justified in presenting the demand for a million to the South African Company (which, by the way, had been divested, immediately after the Raid, of its control of any military force), and asking for full particulars as to the items for specific damage.

In an earlier Despatch he had protested against the Aliens Law of 1896 as a breach of the Convention, and for nearly three years conducted an epistolary duel with Mr Krüger, who found most able dialecticians in Mr T. W. Reitz and Dr Leyds. It will be sufficient to give an outline of the Diplomatic controversy. It should be noted that the Boer representatives professed scrupulous respect for the Conventions, and that Mr Chamberlain, on his side, was most careful, during 1897 and 1898, to ask for nothing which he was not entitled to demand under those Instruments.

The interpretation given to the clauses by the Boer argument was so vague as to make them practically inoperative, while Mr Chamberlain insisted upon a reading that would ensure real protection to British subjects and their interests. The Boer Diplomatists made it plain that they would not accept a compromise, and they refused to revoke or suspend the Aliens Law, though they were prepared to concert with other South African States measures for the exclusion of "undesirables." As for the conclusion of Treaties, such as the Convention of Geneva, and the Extradition Treaty with the

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Netherlands, they refused to see, despite the plain language of the London Convention, that the British Government had any grievance because it had been kept in ignorance of these transactions. They defended the Expulsion Law as reasonable and politic, and sought to justify their oppressive treatment of Johannesburg newspapers. They complained of the action of the British Government on account of the Raid, suggesting that the whole case on both sides should be referred to the President of the Swiss Republic for Arbitration.

Mr Chamberlain (16th October 1897) replied in an elaborate Despatch on the whole controversy. He agreed that a Conference on the subject of keeping out undesirable persons from South Africa as a whole might be expedient, but upheld his claim to be consulted about any Transvaal legislation derogatory to the rights of British subjects under the Conventions. Article 14 of the London Convention (the right of free entry, etc.) "contains one of the essential conditions upon which complete Self-Government was accorded by Her Majesty to the South African Republic." As for the breaches of Article 4, governing Foreign relations, the Republic was bound to adhere strictly to its terms. Mr Chamberlain protested against the implication that the Jameson Raid was a breach of the Convention by Her Majesty's Government, or could be treated as a grievance against Great Britain. It was the act of private individuals, repudiated by the Government immediately it became known.

As to the Arbitration proposal, the Boer Government, Mr Chamberlain pointed out, had forgotten that the Conventions did not constitute a Treaty between two independent States, but,

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under certain terms and conditions in the Preamble of the 1881 Convention and the substituted Articles of the 1884 Convention, only gave Self-Government to the Transvaal subject to the Suzerainty of the Queen and her successors. "Under these Conventions Her Majesty's Government held towards the South African Republic the relation of a Suzerain who has accorded to the people of that Republic Self-Government upon certain conditions, and it would be incompatible with that position to submit to Arbitration the construction of the conditions on which she accorded Self-Government to the Republic. One of the main objects which Her Majesty's Government had in view was the prevention of the interference of any Foreign Power between Her Majesty and the South African Republic—a matter which they then held, and which Her Majesty's present Government still hold, to be essential to British interests; and this object would be defeated by the course now proposed."

While Mr Reitz kept the paper controversy alive—showing, it must be admitted, no slight resourcefulness and Diplomatic ability—the Boer Executive made matters worse for the Uitlanders, whose condition became increasingly unpleasant as the Government relaxed its efforts to preserve order on the Rand, where complaints, some of which may have been exaggerated, as to outrage on person and property were not infrequent. The worst of these instances resulted in the death of a British subject named Edgar at the hands of the Boer police. On the most lenient interpretation, this was an act of unjustifiable brutality, and the Uitlanders, on 23rd December 1898, feeling that they must no longer submit to official tyranny, addressed to the Crown,

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through the British Vice-consul, the Petition that recounts their grievances.

Sir A. Milner, who had paid a brief visit to England at the end of this year, and held close conference with the Colonial Secretary, supported the Petition in a remarkable Despatch. He defended the Uitlanders from the charge of being a mere crowd of money-grabbers, careless of political rights or personal dignity so long as they could fill their purses with sufficient rapidity. In a further telegraphic Despatch of May 1899, reviewing the whole position, he informed Mr Chamberlain that what the Imperial authority had to deal with was a popular movement of a like kind with that of 1894-95 before it was ruined by a conspiracy of which the mass of the Uitlanders were ignorant. None of the grievances then complained of had been remedied; others had been added. It was a wilful perversion of the truth to represent the movement as artificial — the work of scheming capitalists or professional agitators. The bulk of the population were not birds of passage, but men who contemplated making a permanent home in the country, and would become excellent citizens if they had the chance.

"I may sometimes have abstained," Sir Alfred said, "when I ought to have protested, from my great dislike of ineffectual nagging. But I feel that the attempt to remedy the hundred and one wrongs springing from a hopeless system by taking up isolated cases is perfectly vain. It may easily lead to War, but will never lead to real improvement." The true remedy was to strike at the root—the political impotence of the injured. What Diplomatic protests would never accomplish, a fair measure of Uitlander representation would

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gradually but surely bring about. "The case for intervention is overwhelming." "The spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of Helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievances, and calling vainly to Her Majesty's Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence of Great Britain and the respect for the British Government within the Queen's Dominions. . . . I see nothing which will put a stop to this mischievous propaganda but some striking proof of the intention of Her Majesty's Government not to be ousted from its position in South Africa. And the best proof alike of its power and its justice would be to obtain for the Uitlanders in the Transvaal a fair share in the Government of the country which owes everything to their exertions."

With this Petition and these Despatches before him, Mr Chamberlain had to decide—and to carry the Cabinet with him—whether to let matters drift, with the likelihood, in the long run, of Great Britain losing her ascendancy in South Africa, or to intervene vigorously and run the risk of War. The Government resolved to act in the spirit of Sir A. Milner's recommendations. In a long Despatch of 10th May 1899, Mr Chamberlain reviewed the position of the Uitlanders, and showed how they had striven in vain to improve their lot by Constitutional action. When they took up arms in 1895, the President had promised them reforms. But, so far from any substantial remedy having been granted, the new legislation had, on the whole, had the effect of increasing the causes of complaint. After a summary of their grievances in detail—legislative, financial, judicial, and administrative—he came to the conclusion that,

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under the conditions that had grown up since the Convention of 1884 was signed, the Uitlanders were deprived of that equality of treatment which the Instrument was designed to secure for them. Her Majesty's Government had been anxious to extend every consideration to a weaker State which in recent years had had just reason to complain of the action of British subjects.

Recognising the exceptional circumstances of the case, they had refrained, since the Despatch of 4th February 1896 (suggesting autonomy for the Rand), from pressure upon the Republic, except in cases where there had been a distinct breach of the Conventions; and they had held back in the hope that the Government of the Republic would voluntarily meet the expectations raised by the President. They were most unwilling to depart from this attitude of reserve and expectation, but, "having regard to the position of Great Britain as the Paramount Power in South Africa, and the duty incumbent upon them to protect all British subjects residing in a foreign country, they cannot permanently ignore the exceptional and arbitrary treatment to which their fellow-countrymen and others are exposed, and the absolute indifference of the Government of the Republic to the friendly representations which had been made to them on the subject."

Earnestly solicitous as Her Majesty's Government were for the prosperity of the Republic, and anxious as they were to avoid any intervention in its internal concerns, Mr Chamberlain concluded by suggesting that a meeting should be arranged between Mr Krüger and Sir A. Milner "for the purpose of discussing the situation in a conciliatory spirit." This suggestion Mr Chamberlain offered as proof that no design was entertained

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against the Independence of the Republic, and expressed his hope that the proposal would result in reasonable concessions to the just demands of the Uitlanders and in a "settlement of the difficulties which have threatened the good relations which Her Majesty's Government desire should constantly exist between themselves and the Government of the South African Republic."

So reasonable a suggestion, coming at the close of a courteous and dignified Despatch, could not be altogether set aside, especially as the idea of a Conference had arisen independently in the mind of Mr Hofmeyer, the Leader of the Bond, whose influence on the side of Peace Mr Chamberlain had sought to enlist at the time of the Raid. The Schreiner Ministry—who had come into power on the temporary withdrawal of Mr Rhodes from public life—also urged a Conference upon Mr Krüger. Yielding to the solicitations of his well-wishers at the Cape, and, either because he honestly wished to avert War, or merely sought to gain time, the President telegraphed that he would gladly discuss with Sir A. Milner "every proposal in a friendly way that could conduce to a good understanding . . . provided that the Independence of the Republic is not impugned." Thereupon President Steyn, of the Orange Free State, issued invitations to a Conference at Bloemfontein. Mr Chamberlain's instructions to Sir A. Milner were simple. He wished to leave the High Commissioner as free a hand as possible, but the Franchise question was to stand first. Even at this late stage Mr Chamberlain was ready to accept full Municipal rights for the Rand as a feasible solution "if the President fears that Independence

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will be endangered by the concession of a general franchise."

Mr Krüger and Sir A. Milner met at Bloemfontein on 31st May 1899, but in order to show with what ideas his Honour went into the Conference, brief reference must be made to the long-standing dispute as to the Suzerainty. Dr Leyds, an even more ingenious and voluminous Diplomatist than Mr Reitz, was serving as State Secretary in 1898, and had sought to explain away the Sovereign rights of Great Britain. His arguments were highly technical, and sufficiently plausible to satisfy those who wished to be convinced. But he weakened rather than strengthened his strictly legal case by importing into it a travesty of recent historical events, on which he exposed himself to confutation. His technical contention was that the Suzerainty was affirmed only in the Preamble to the Convention of 1881, that it was not reproduced in the Convention of 1884, and that the latter Convention was in substitution of the previous one, and should be interpreted by itself. Acting on this argumentative elimination of the Suzerainty, Dr Leyds again put forward a proposal for foreign Arbitration. Mr Chamberlain (15th December 1898) declined to accept the suggested repudiation of the Suzerainty, and maintained that the Preamble of the 1881 Convention was not repealed in 1884, the Articles only of the 1884 Instrument being substituted for the Articles only of that of 1881. In pursuance of this view, he again informed the Boer Government that Her Majesty's Government declined to sanction any Treaty or Engagement with a foreign State which was not submitted for approval before its conclusion. Nor would he consent to refer any

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question to the Arbitration of a foreign Power. There were replies and counter-replies to these Despatches, and thus the wrangle had gone on until May 1899, when Mr Reitz—who had again taken up the duties of State Secretary, in order that Dr Leyds might be set free for his Diplomatic business in Europe — made a vigorous attack upon Mr Chamberlain's whole position, and boldly advanced the contention that the Transvaal had the "inherent" rights of "a Sovereign International State."

Sir A. Milner fastened upon these words, and so did Mr Chamberlain. "The way in which the State Secretary juggles with the Convention of 1884," wrote the High Commissioner, "is rather irritating to a plain man. But the importance of the matter does not consist in his arguments. It consists in the assertion that the South African Republic is 'a Sovereign International State.' This appears to me to be contradictory of the position consistently maintained by us, and in fact in the nature of a defiance of Her Majesty's Government!" Mr Chamberlain concurred in these views, but his Despatch was not written until after the Bloemfontein Conference, and, interesting as it is as an historical review, going back to the Sand River Convention of 1852, and as an assertion of legal right, it need not be further dealt with. It has been made sufficiently clear that Mr Krüger went into the Conference, in his own view, as the head of "a Sovereign International State"—a State over which no Suzerainty had existed since the signature of the 1884 Convention.

At the Conference Sir A. Milner proposed the full franchise for every Uitlander who— 1, had been resident for five years in the

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Republic; 2, declared his intention to reside permanently there; 3, took an oath to obey the laws and defend the Independence of the country, and discharge other obligations of citizenship. This Mr Krüger described as tantamount to handing over his country to foreigners. He made, however, counter-proposals for facilitating naturalisation, and for giving the franchise on a property qualification, though hedged about with various stringent conditions. This offer was so different from what Sir A. Milner had expected, that he fell back on the idea of local autonomy for the Rand, with which, however, the President would have nothing to do. After much controversy, Mr Krüger suggested a franchise scheme in exchange for foreign Arbitration upon the Convention, and this proved to be the breaking-point of the Conference. The question of Arbitration must, Sir Alfred argued, be considered on its merits, and on no point would Her Majesty's Government agree to reference to any Foreign Government. The Conference therefore closed, and nothing further need be said of it except that Mr Krüger had endeavoured to utilise it for obtaining payment of the bill of damages, on account of the Raid, and for gaining final and complete control over Swaziland.

It was for Mr Chamberlain to consider whether anything could be done with Mr Krüger's counter-proposals as to the franchise. The Schreiner Ministry at the Cape, though admitting that the suggested concessions were open to amendment, thought they represented a great advance on anything that Mr Krüger had previously offered, and informed Mr Chamberlain that in their judgment the state of things

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in the Transvaal did not justify active intervention in the internal affairs of the Republic.

"To this I strongly demurred," wrote Sir A. Milner to Mr Chamberlain, who instructed him to tell the Cape Ministry that the Imperial Government were most anxious to avoid active interference, and trusted that Mr Schreiner and his colleagues would use their influence with Mr Krüger to take such action as would avert intervention. From this point, matters became inextricably tangled. A Franchise Bill was produced and submitted to the Volksraad, and the Cape Ministry (which, meanwhile, was doing nothing to check the active importation of arms and ammunition into the Transvaal through ports in the Colony) informed Mr Chamberlain that it thought the scheme "adequate, satisfactory, and such as should secure a peaceful settlement." During June and July Mr Chamberlain watched and waited. On the 23rd of the latter month the Volksraad passed the Bill, the main feature of which was that it would give the franchise on a seven years' residential qualification, with naturalisation.

Apparently, therefore, there was only a two years' difference between the Milner proposals at Bloemfontein and the Law as passed; but, as a matter of fact, the concession was encumbered with conditions that made it unworkable and ridiculous as a remedy for Uitlander grievances. Meanwhile, the Boer Government, adroitly taking advantage of a phrase somewhat incautiously dropt by Sir A. Milner at the Conference, chose to assume that Mr Chamberlain might admit the principle of foreign Arbitration "on differences arising out of the various interpretations" of the London Convention, and presented

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a cut-and-dried scheme for an Arbitration Tribunal consisting of a Boer, a British subject, and a foreigner chosen by the two as President. Sir A. Milner pointed out that this proposal was absolutely inconsistent with the principle that Her Majesty's Government would allow no foreign interference whatever on questions between itself and the Republic. Mr Chamberlain also would have none of it. On 27th July he summed up the position in a Despatch in which he allowed himself greater freedom of utterance than he had previously indulged in, charging the Boer Government with having deliberately placed one of the two white races in a position of political inferiority; complaining of its not having made adequate proposals at Bloemfontein, of having declined the demand for Municipal Government for the Rand, and of having since passed a Franchise Law which was obviously unacceptable—though he suggested that this should nevertheless be subjected to technical examination by a Commission consisting of representatives of the two Governments.

As for the Boer plan of Arbitration, Mr Chamberlain swept it aside. Her Majesty's Government felt "compelled to declare emphatically that under no circumstances whatever will they admit the intervention of any Foreign Power in regard to their interpretations of the Convention." If, however, the Boer Government was prepared to agree to the exclusion of any foreign element from the Tribunal, Her Majesty's Government would consider by what methods such questions of interpretation could be judicially decided. He recommended that, after the technical points of the Franchise Law had been threshed out, there should be a further personal conference between

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Mr Krüger and Sir A. Milner to discuss Arbitration and other matters than the Franchise. But these efforts to find a way out of the difficulties had little effect. Mr Conyngham Greene however, was actively at work at Pretoria, and, as a result of his negotiations, the Boer Government, in the middle of August made new proposals relating to the Franchise—yielding a five years' residential qualification. But they attached to this certain unreasonable conditions, the chief being that the assertion of the Suzerainty should not be insisted upon, and that the claim should be dropped, that there should at no future time be any interference with the internal affairs of the Republic, and that as soon as the amended Franchise Law were passed there should be Arbitration on other matters in dispute under the Convention by a Tribunal, the President of which should be a citizen of the Orange Free State.

Mr Chamberlain gave a qualified acceptance of the Five Years' Franchise proposal, but rejected the conditions with which it was coupled, for reasons which will have been gathered from his preceding Despatches. But he did not exclude the idea of Arbitration, and urged a further Conference between Sir A. Milner and Mr Krüger. By this time, however, the Boers had amassed so enormous a quantity of arms and ammunition—thanks, partly, to the inaction of the Schreiner Ministry at the Cape—that they had become intolerant of discussion. On the 2nd September they withdrew their amended Franchise proposals, and disposed with almost contemptuous brevity of Mr Chamberlain's reasons for rejecting the conditions attached to the Five Years' offer. A few days later, how-

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ever, they intimated their readiness to renew the conference between the President and Sir A. Milner. But this proposal was sent on the very day on which the British Cabinet answered the Boer Note of the 2nd in a Despatch declaring a willingness to accept the Five Years' offer unconditionally, and reserving the right "to reconsider the situation *de novo*, and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement." The Boer Government would not, however, withdraw the conditions, and awaited these final proposals. As a result of a further meeting of the Cabinet, Mr Chamberlain (22nd September) sent a Despatch to the Boer Government expressing profound regret at its attitude, and closing thus :—

"The refusal of the Government of the South African Republic to entertain the offer thus made, coming as it does at the end of nearly four months' protracted negotiations, themselves the climax of an agitation extending over a period of more than five years, makes it useless to further pursue a discussion on the lines hitherto followed, and Her Majesty's Government are now compelled to consider the situation afresh, and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement of the issues which have been created in South Africa by the policy constantly followed for many years by the Government of the South African Republic. They will communicate to you the result of their deliberations in a later Despatch."

That Despatch was never sent. Space need not be occupied with an account of the efforts of the Boer Government to obscure the issues by bringing a charge of breach of faith against Mr Conyngham Greene, who was alleged to have induced the offer of the Five Years' Franchise by giving the Boer Government to understand

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that the conditions would be acceptable in London. Nor is it necessary to make more than a passing reference to the lengthy communications in which Mr Steyn sought to justify Mr Krüger's attitude. How far the President of the Orange Free State was sincere in assuming the *rôle* of peacemaker at the eleventh hour, it is difficult to say.

The more moderate Transvaalers believe, or profess to believe, that Mr Steyn was desirous of averting conflict, nor is it inconsistent with their view of his motives that when War had broken out he was strenuous in waging it and obstinate in prolonging it. Whatever may have been his real purpose in the Summer of 1899, it is certain that his pacific intervention came too late. The Pretoria Government, confident of military strength, and trusting to the deceptive assurances of help from Europe, were in no temper to listen to reason, even from their kinsmen in the Free State. Mr Chamberlain, however, replied to Mr Steyn, by referring him to recent Despatches, defining the situation and the views of Her Majesty's Government, and, with regard to his complaints of "the enormous and ever-increasing military preparations of Her Majesty's Government," reminded him that these had been forced upon the Ministry by "the policy of the South African Republic, which has transformed the Transvaal into a permanent armed camp, threatening the peace of the whole of South Africa and the position of Great Britain as the Paramount State." The interval between 22nd September and 9th October, the date of the Boer Ultimatum, was occupied by this controversy with Mr Steyn. The time limit fixed

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in the Boer Ultimatum expired at five o'clock on Wednesday, 11th October. The Boer Government was informed on that day that Her Majesty's Government had received with great regret the peremptory demands in the telegram of the 9th, and that they were such that they deemed it impossible to discuss them. Mr Steyn was invited to state whether the Transvaal Ultimatum had his concurrence and support. His reply linked the destinies of the Free State with those of the Transvaal.

It was characteristic of Mr Chamberlain's belief in his own persuasive powers, and in the ultimate reasonableness of other men, that almost to the end he had entertained some hope of averting a rupture. Though events proved him to be mistaken in his estimate of Mr Krüger's personal character and political influence over his countrymen, there were some solid grounds for this faith. As he pointed out in a speech at Birmingham on 26th June, this was by no means the first occasion on which Peace had been imperilled. The trouble in 1885 caused by the Warren Expedition, which had rescued Bechuanaland from the clutch of the Transvaal; the commandeering of British subjects in 1894; the closing of the Drifts in 1895; the Alien Immigration Law of 1897—each of these crises had brought us within view of War. On each of these four occasions pressure had been applied to Mr Krüger, and every time he had given way. The not unnatural inference—though Mr Chamberlain did not define his expectation—was that Mr Krüger would ultimately yield on the question of Reform. Meantime, it seemed to Mr Chamberlain—whose Diplomatic policy is to play with all his cards on the table—that

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the essential thing was to convince Pretoria that the Colonial Office was again in earnest. Speaking as much to the Boers as to his own countrymen, he declared that the root of all the trouble was the misgovernment of the Transvaal. What, then, was the duty of the British Government? In the first place, to secure, if possible, a peaceful settlement. But they would not be thwarted. Ministers, he said, were absolutely unanimous. They would neither be hurried nor held back. They had entered on the business, and they meant to "see it through." He added an appeal to Mr Hofmeyer, whose influence with the Cape Dutch he fully recognised, and to the Schreiner Ministry, to help in bringing the Boers to reason.

It is a necessary incident of a Democratic system, but one which does not always make for Peace, that Diplomatic controversies cannot altogether be withdrawn from public comment. The result is that partially-informed bystanders are tempted to interfere in the game. It would be monstrous to suggest that the Liberal Leaders were actuated by any motive but an honest desire to avert War. Unhappily, they did not realise, not having access to full information, how grave the crisis was. The only means of avoiding a rupture was to convince the Boers that Englishmen as a nation believed in the justice of the claim put forward by the Government, and were prepared, if necessary, to enforce it. It was this impression that Mr Chamberlain had been trying to work into the minds of the Pretoria authorities. It is just conceivable — though, perhaps, it hardly amounts to a probability —that he might have been successful if the chief Liberal Statesmen had either supported him or remained silent. But it happened, unfortunately,

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that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, speaking in absolute good faith, had asserted that in his opinion nothing had occurred to justify War, and with this declaration Lord Kimberley, on 28th July in the House of Lords, expressed his complete concurrence. Naturally, the Boers in the Transvaal—relying on the reports transmitted to them by their agents in Europe, who were themselves misled by English enthusiasts—believed that the two great Parties in this country were divided on the South African Question, and that, in Mr Krüger's words, it was good policy to "wait for the Opposition."

Though the uncompromising language used by Mr Chamberlain was backed up by an equally explicit statement from Lord Salisbury—"we have put our hands to the plough," he said, "and we do not intend to turn back"—it was not believed in Pretoria that the British Government would press matters to an extremity. There would have been some basis for this scepticism if the dispute had been merely about the Transvaal Franchise, or the conditions that should attend it. The issue, however, was a much broader one. This was plainly stated by Mr Chamberlain in the House of Commons. To talk of "race antagonism" as the result of a future War was, he said, misleading. That race antagonism was already in existence. British subjects in the Transvaal were kept in a position of "humiliating inferiority." They were subject to injury and outrage, and the remonstrances of the Suzerain Power were treated with contempt. The question between Great Britain and the Transvaal was not one of some petty reform. "It is nothing of the kind," he said. "It is the power and authority of the British Empire. It is the position of

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Great Britain in South Africa. It is the question of our predominance, and how it is to be interpreted, and it is the question of Peace throughout South Africa."

His detailed vindication of the negotiations conducted by the Colonial Office need not be recapitulated. His conclusion was resolute, but not unconciliatory. The reason why, for three years, no exceptional pressure had been applied to President Krüger to give a reply to Lord Ripon's 1894 Despatch was that everything had been thrown back by the Raid. During those years the Colonial Office had practised "excessive patience and forbearance." It had waited in the hope that concessions would be made. But things had gone from bad to worse. There was no desire or intention of annexing a country which had been voluntarily given its Independence. On the contrary, the policy of Great Britain was to strengthen the South African Republic by "turning its discontented aliens into loyal fellow-citizens of the Dutch." But the Government of the Transvaal must "accept in principle, and make some approach in practice to, that equality of conditions between the two white races which was intended to be provided by the Convention, and was certainly promised in the interviews and conference before the Convention was signed." Otherwise the Transvaal would remain what it then was—a source of unrest, disturbance, and danger.

Though the situation was anxious Mr Chamberlain declared himself still hopeful—hopeful because he believed that Mr Krüger understood the Government were in earnest, and because the great mass of the English people were prepared to support them in any measures

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which they might think necessary to take. This was at the end of July. On 9th August, on the winding-up of the Session, Mr Chamberlain spoke with equal firmness, though less hopefully. On 26th August he made at Highbury a speech which, while it left the door open for arrangement, showed that in his opinion the preceding negotiations had not materially improved the situation. Some little progress had been made, but the crisis had by no means passed. "Mr Krüger procrastinates in his replies, he dribbles out reforms like water from a squeezed sponge." The demands made at the Bloemfontein Conference were so moderate that many persons thought they verged on weakness. Less could not be asked, less would not be taken. These emphatic words were followed by more minatory language than Mr Chamberlain had hitherto employed. The issues of Peace and War lay with President Krüger. Would he speak the necessary words? The sand was running down in the glass! The situation was too dangerous and too strained to permit of indefinite postponement. To show that he was speaking for his colleagues as well as for the Colonial Office, he cited Mr Balfour's remark that the knot must be loosened, or we should have to find other ways of untying it. He also quoted Lord Salisbury's warning that if the present delay were much prolonged we should not hold ourselves bound by the offers we had already made, but should take measures to prove once for all which was the Paramount Power in South Africa, and to secure to the British at least those rights and privileges which were promised them when Independence was restored to the Transvaal. If, Mr Chamberlain added, a rupture were forced on the

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British Government, they would, he was sure, have the support of the vast majority of the people of the United Kingdom—of the British Empire.

Nevertheless, his subsequent Despatches were the reverse of provocative. The one written on 8th September was made the object of special laudation at a meeting of Radicals called by the "Transvaal Committee," a body which had been formed to maintain the Independence of the South African Republic, and to protest against War being declared. Even Mr Leonard Courtney expressed a hope that Mr Krüger might induce the Boers to accept the proposals of a document which, he said, was a "rebuke to the fire-eaters," and especially to that "lost mind"—Sir Alfred Milner.

It was, it will be remembered, one of the latest theories of this political group that the hand of the Secretary of State was being forced by the High Commissioner; that Mr Chamberlain was working for Peace while Sir Alfred Milner was bent on making War. There was no shadow of foundation for this suggestion. Neither officially nor morally could the Chief separate himself from his Representative. It is not likely, on this question or any other, that two men of powerful and original minds could see exactly eye to eye, but in every instance of disagreement in detail the action taken by the High Commissioner was the action of the Secretary of State, and for every success or failure of the former the latter was exclusively responsible—not merely in a technical and Parliamentary sense. Not only were both pursuing the same object, but, so far as was possible at a distance of 6000 miles, their methods were adopted in

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concert and after consultation. They were equally anxious to reach a satisfactory settlement, and equally determined, if Peace could not be preserved, that the final provocation should not be given by Great Britain.

Morally, when two nations are going to fight, it does not matter which of them says the last word or strikes the first blow. Practically, however, in a country governed by public opinion, it is important, when a serious War is in view, that the enemy shall be made to put himself in the wrong. It was, therefore, a Diplomatic success — which must be scored to the joint credit of Mr Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner — that they so conducted the negotiations that the Ultimatum which began the War was issued by the Boers, who followed up that initial blunder by an immediate invasion of British soil. Strategically, no doubt, they had no other course open than to start without delay on their long-contemplated inroad on Natal. But it turned many wavering minds in England. The language of menace and the act of aggression killed any lingering sympathy with the Boers, and many Radicals who had preached forbearance and magnanimity before hostilities broke out agreed, on 11th October, that nothing could be done except avenge a wanton insult. Even the Continental advocates of the Boer cause, except those on the subsidised Press, admitted that their *protégées*, by this blunder, had compelled the British Government to enter on a war of subjugation. That we should fail in the undertaking our candid friends hoped and believed, but that we must make the attempt, or withdraw from South Africa and see our Colonial Empire break up by degrees, was universally

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admitted. For this initial advantage—that we could say without fear of contradiction that we were fighting in self-defence—the country was indebted to the much-criticised Diplomacy of Mr Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner.

Once the War had begun the immediate responsibility of Mr Chamberlain for the greater part of South Africa was partially suspended, and his activity was chiefly displayed in such matters as supervising the administration of the Concentration Camps and place of refuge provided for Boers who had "come in" voluntarily. In the management of these humanely intended institutions, he was able, when the first difficulties had been surmounted, to suggest certain improvements and, with characteristic disregard for official procrastination, to see that they were promptly carried into effect. His vigour in this respect was warmly applauded by generally hostile critics, especially as it gave them a chance of having a fling at other servants of the Crown whose intentions, no doubt, were not less benevolent than those of the Colonial Secretary, but who were not equally gifted with the indefinable power of "getting things done." The praise given on such terms has been contemptuously repudiated by Mr Chamberlain.

The defenceless condition of Natal when the War broke out was due to no neglect on the part of Mr Chamberlain or his predecessors in Downing Street—it was the result of a too early concession of Self-Government to that very loyal and progressive Colony. The problem of defence had not been properly concerted between the War Office, which was well acquainted with the strategical difficulties, and the local Ministry, which had not troubled itself about a

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danger that appeared too remote for "practical politicians." Mr Chamberlain had at an early stage pledged himself to the Natal Government that the Colony would be defended with the whole force of the Empire, and on this they relied. This promise, not unnaturally, was literally interpreted, and taken to bind us to defensive operations within British territory. Though the Commander-in-Chief in South Africa was, so far as the Imperial Government were concerned, absolutely unfettered in discretion, it was impossible to resist the pressure applied by the Colonial Ministry. In passing judgment on the initial misfortunes of the War, it should be remembered that the British officers considered that their first duty was to save Natal from being overrun by the enemy. In that object the "Ladysmith Entanglement" was at least successful. Whether the result was too dearly purchased, is a question that need not be discussed here.

During the War Mr Chamberlain kept a close watch upon the political situation at the Cape; but during the earlier stages of the conflict, the separate responsibility of the Colonial Secretary was in suspense. We may pass to December 1900 when, the two Colonies having been formally annexed, he interested himself in the question of Peace, and prepared for the still greater problems of the approaching Settlement. A strong note of friendliness to the Boer people now reappears in his communications to the High Commissioner, who paid a brief visit to England and was raised to the Peerage in the following year. The negotiations between Lord Kitchener and Commandant Botha at Middelburg in February 1901 were

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unsuccessful. Our terms were refused, and Mr Chamberlain had to announce that they were withdrawn.

Nevertheless, he set to work actively upon the task of reconstruction, defining in a Despatch of 2nd August 1901, the lines on which the future Government of the two Colonies should be administered. Lord Milner was relieved of the Governorship of Cape Colony, and appointed Administrator of the Orange River and Transvaal Colonies. Sir David Barbour was sent to inquire into the finances and prospects of the newly acquired territories. Other Commissions were instituted to report on the prospects of Land Settlement, and to investigate the validity of the Transvaal Railway and other Concessions. By these and similar methods a vast mass of knowledge and instructed opinion was collected in view of the expected Peace. From the summary, given below, of the terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging, 1st June 1902, it will be seen that, although the submission of the enemy was fairly complete, the obligations assumed by the British Government were by no means inconsiderable.

It was agreed—(1) that all Burghers in the field should forthwith lay down their arms and recognise King Edward VII. as their lawful Sovereign; (2) that all Burghers outside the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, and all prisoners of war should, on formally accepting their position as British subjects, be restored as soon as practicable to their homes, and (3) should not be deprived of their personal liberty or their property; (4) that no civil or criminal proceedings should be instituted against any of the surrendering or returning Burghers for acts arising from

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the prosecution of the War (except certain acts contrary to the usages of war); (5) that the Dutch language should be taught in all public schools in the two Colonies if the parents of the children should desire it, and should be permissible in Courts of Law; (6) that the possession of rifles should be allowed to persons who required them for self-protection, and who took out licences; (7) that Military Government should be succeeded as soon as possible by Civil Government, and that Representative Institutions, leading to Self-Government, should be introduced as soon as circumstances should permit; (8) that the question of giving the franchise to natives should not be settled until after the introduction of Self-Government; (9) that no special War tax should be laid on the two Colonies; (10) that a Commission, in which the local inhabitants were represented, should be appointed in each district to assist the restoration of the people to their homes, and supply their immediate and other wants: that the British Government should grant £3,000,000 for this purpose, and should allow notes issued and receipts given by officers of the late Republics to be presented to a Judicial Commission appointed by the Government, and, if it were found that valuable consideration had been received, they should be treated as evidence of War losses; that, in addition to the free grant of £3,000,000 the Government should make advances on loan, free of interest for two years, and afterwards at 3 per cent.—but not to any foreigner or rebel.

As to rebels from Cape Colony and Natal, Lord Milner undertook that any who surrendered at once, would, on their return to their homes, be dealt with according to the laws of the Colony to which they belonged. The Cape Government

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had decided that rebels of the rank-and-file should be disqualified for ever from the exercise of political rights, but that Justices of the Peace, Field Cornets, and other officials of the Cape Government should be tried for high treason and punished according to the discretion of the Court except that in no case should the penalty of death be inflicted.

Roughly, no doubt, that Instrument represented Mr Chamberlain's view of an equitable arrangement, though personally, perhaps, he would have been inclined to insist upon a capitulation absolutely unqualified. While willing to treat the Boers with even greater liberality than was promised them, he believed that every concession on the part of the British Government should be made as a matter of grace. This, of course, was sound in itself, but financial considerations and military advice were against it. If the Boer Leaders had chosen to break off negotiations they could, undoubtedly, have delayed for some months the final subjugation of the country, and each month of guerrilla operations would mean several millions of money. The price was too high to pay for the vindication of abstract principle, and this was realised as fully by the Colonial Secretary as by any of his colleagues. He felt, too, that his reputation in the annals of the British Colonies as a constructive Statesman would rest not upon the text of the Treaty—which was a matter for the whole Cabinet—but in the use to be made of the great opportunity thus placed in his hands.

No point in Mr Chamberlain's South African policy has been viewed with more serious misgivings by his Imperialist supporters than his refusal, last year, to ask for the suspension of

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Constitutional Government in Cape Colony. It was pointed out that the Premier, Sir J. Gordon Sprigg, could only maintain himself in office by co-operation with the Afrikander Bond, and, though his personal loyalty was never called into question, he was denounced as a trimmer by nature as well as in virtue of his admittedly precarious position. Nor could it be denied that many of those whom he sought to conciliate were more than suspected of complicity with the Cape rebels, while others, though taking no overt part in the actual conspiracy, had scarcely attempted to conceal their sympathy with constructive sedition.

These were arguments not to be lightly overruled at a time when the ink was hardly dry on the Treaty of Peace, while there were still a considerable number of "stalwarts" in every South African Colony not unwilling to renew the guerrilla operations, and while the Dutch Party as a whole were already clamouring for an enlargement of the concessions made in the Vereeniging Convention. The position of the Loyalists in Cape Colony had been no more than tolerable even while they were protected by the operation of Martial Law; and persecution would be commenced in every district where the Dutch held a majority if Representative Institutions were at once revived. These considerations did for a time prevail with Lord Milner. In that view the Colonial Secretary did not concur. It was essential, in his opinion, that the Imperial Government should not be chargeable with taking sides between the two Parties at the Cape, and that the Dutch should have no excuse for saying that they did not get fair play. This was a more urgent need than the

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avoidance of Parliamentary friction at Capetown, while it would always be possible, at short notice, to prevent—by force if necessary—the execution of any dangerous measures that might be proposed by a Bond majority.

Two minor influences tended in the same direction. In the first place, the legal term of the Cape Parliament's life was nearly at hand, and it would be time enough to interfere with Constitutional Government should the result of the General Election bring the Bond Extremists into power. Secondly, to suspend the Cape Constitution it would be necessary, if not to pass an Act of the Imperial Parliament, at least to obtain the sanction of the House of Commons, and this would involve a renewal of political strife at Westminster just when all Parties had more or less agreed to assist Ministers in their development of a policy of conciliation and reconstruction. On the whole, then, the balance of advantage pointed to the temporary and provisional maintenance of Constitutional procedure, and to giving the moderate men in the Dutch and British Parties a chance of working out a *modus vivendi*. The success of the scheme remains to be tested by events, but, against any possible drawbacks that may ensue, must be set the certainty that, had the opposite policy been followed, the division between Parties in the Colony would have been more sharply accentuated than before—the Moderates on each side being forced to support the Extremists. Though it would have been comparatively easy, for a term of years, to administer the Colony from Downing Street, through the High Commissioner, and under the bayonets of a strong British garrison, the Dutch malcontents, if they

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had been excluded from the right of open agitation, would have been driven into secret conspiracy, and every month during which an autocratic régime was kept up would defer the date at which the old Democratic system could safely be restored. Moreover, it was a policy that would certainly be reversed as soon as the Unionist Party here should have been thrown out of power. For these reasons, if for none others, it was decided to give another chance to Representative Government in the most turbulent Colony within the British Empire.

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CHAPTER XV*

THE WEST INDIAN COLONIES

THOUGH Mr Chamberlain has as yet been unable to accomplish great results in the West Indies, it can at least be said that he has prepared the way for important developments in the future. His time and energy, since he became Colonial Secretary, have been heavily taxed by vaster and more urgent problems than those which claim the attention of Statesmen in the Caribbean. But he has initiated a new era, and quickened the stagnant populations, by his force of will, his power of direction, his sympathetic understanding of their needs and difficulties. Years must pass before these beautiful but unfortunate Colonies show an appreciable advance in material prosperity and social evolution. But an impetus has been given to the island and mainland communities, which is felt not less by the black labourer at the base of the social pyramid than by the white planter with his uncertain foothold on the summit. Mr Chamberlain has impressed his personality upon the minds of the mixed races who inhabit the Archipelago and the fertile mud flats leading to the terraced uplands of Raleigh's "magnifi-

* For this and the following Chapter, as well as for much valuable help on South African and Colonial topics generally, the author is indebted to Mr H. Whates, editor of *The Politician's Handbook.*

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cent province." They know him to be a thinking, contriving, operating force, not an official abstraction, not an automatic figure-head of a great bureaucratic system, as so many of his predecessors at the Colonial Office had been to them. By the policy he has thought out for them, and successfully recommended to Parliament, and by the measures he has thus far taken to give it practical effect, he has turned the mood of the West Indian peoples from despondency and fear to hope and courage.

But, except for this change of temper and outlook, they are as blighted by poverty and as incapable of self-help as they were before he went to Downing Street. No Statesman wields a magician's wand. That Mr Chamberlain has been unable to perform a miracle, and convert the West Indies from a state of chronic distress into rich and progressive communities, is due partly to conditions rooted in an unhappy past, partly to climatic, racial, and other natural factors which will persist to the end of time. It is these historical causes and natural phenomena which make the work of the Statesman who would restore the lost glories of the West Indies so arduous and so slow to bear fruit. In order to show the nature of the problem that Mr Chamberlain had to handle, it is desirable, before describing what he has done, briefly to suggest such broad generalisations as will suffice to create a mental picture of the British West Indies. They lie in the Tropics, under a sun so fierce that the white man will not labour in the open. Seen from the Atlantic, the islands are, for the most part, of rare beauty. The mainland Colony of Guiana, as approached from the ocean, is, however, almost repellent—the sea discoloured with alluvial, the

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land showing only an interminable line of courida bush: not until the 40-mile belt of mud flats is crossed do the successive elevations stretching backwards and upwards begin. The area of the entire group is something under 117,000 square miles. The islands range in size from Jamaica with more than 4000 square miles to a cluster of islets scarcely worth separate identification. Except for Barbados, every inch of which is cultivated, and where the negro population is so dense that the eye rests nowhere without seeing human forms, there are but few signs of occupation beyond the harbours and the easily accessible coast lands. The whole group of Colonies contains less than 1,750,000 inhabitants, of whom only a few thousand are whites.

The negro is in overwhelming preponderance, and, despite all that is said of his sloth, he does the bulk of the work of the Colonies, though in Guiana, and in a lesser degree in Trinidad, the mainstay of the sugar industry is in the East Indian immigrants. Negroes, people of every shade from the mulatto to the creole with but the faintest "touch of the tarbrush," indentured immigrants from Central and Southern India, Chinese, Portuguese, originally from Madeira and the Cape de Verde Islands, red men from the primeval forests —now a dying race—and a sprinkling of whites, make a kaleidoscopic picture in a West Indian street. Though the conditions of each Colony vary as to population and pursuits, they are all broadly alike in their dependence upon agriculture—in other words, save for certain field industries in Jamaica and Trinidad, and for the nascent gold and diamond workings of Guiana, upon sugar. There are no manufactures. The trade

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of the whole group is, in round figures, of the annual value of £14,000,000 sterling.

Politically, the Colonies are ruled from Downing Street. The Crown Colony system, or a modification of it, prevails. The official and representative elements are almost wholly white, and the sugar planters have hitherto been predominant in the Legislative Councils and with the Colonial Office. The owners of the sugar properties are chiefly absentees. The white population, therefore, in the main, consists of officials and European agents of proprietors who pay flying visits to their estates. Broadly speaking, there is no permanent white element—no aristocratic class which has any other social ideal in the West Indies beyond that of extracting sufficient wealth to enable them to return to England. Beneath this section is the great mass of native labour—the creoles and negroes who must remain where they are and live on the soil somehow, and the East Indians, who are entitled to a return passage to their homes, at the expense, if needs be, of the Imperial Government. Apart from this latter race, the few thousand Chinese, the Portuguese, and the Aborigines—who are not a factor in the problem, except in so far as the presence of handfuls of nomads in the primeval silence of Guiana may be thus regarded—the black and coloured populations constitute the chief care of the Government.

Without them the West Indies are almost valueless to the Empire; the future of the Colonies and the future of the negro inhabitants are one and the same question. Now the West Indian negro has reached a singular stage in the process of evolution. His character has been profoundly

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modified by exemption from slavery, by the infusion of white blood, and by the crude assimilation of Christianity and the social ideas of the white race. But he has been grossly mismanaged. Statesmanship set him free, but did nothing to teach him how to use his liberty. It allowed him to squat for half a century in the neighbourhood of the sugar estates; and the planters took care that he should still be economically dependent upon them, and should be prevented from obtaining his own terms in the Labour market. This they compassed by a policy of shutting him off from the Crown Lands, by importing coolies and making the negro bear a disproportionate burden of taxation. They aimed only at keeping their estates in profitable cultivation.

Successive Home Governments took the planter's limited view of West Indian problems. Statesmanship subordinated itself to commercialism — a commercialism so narrow that the structure of civilisation in the West Indies was based on the shifting foundations provided by an industry whose extinction, under the combined influence of science and hostile tariffs, was always being threatened. Danger was foreseen, but ignored. Meanwhile, the negro, with the memory of slavery tinging every thought, held himself aloof from the white planter, except so far as sheer necessity obliged him to work in the cane-fields; and the planter, naturally perhaps, had scant concern for the black man, putting every difficulty in the way of any policy other than that of stereotyping the economic dependence of the negro upon the estates.

As for the intermediate class of coloured persons —a class steadily being increased by unrestricted miscegenation—they refused to work on the plantations at all, or to use such limited opportunities

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as were open to them for tilling the soil on their own account. They despised the black man and aped the white, taking chiefly to clerical and light occupations, and cherishing a sense of grievance because the minor Government posts were filled from Home. So long as the sugar industry continued to be profitable, affairs drifted on without disaster, the black and coloured population subsisting at a low level—economically worse, in many respects, than that maintained in the days of Slavery—but orderly and law-abiding, though stirred by vague ambitions and discontents. The whites deteriorated in wealth and vigour, successive Governors finding themselves almost powerless, because of the dead weight of planter obstruction and of Colonial Office apathy, to carry out any other policy than that which the sugar owners thought — often shortsightedly — would serve their exclusive interests.

These being the conditions of life in the West Indies, it will not be difficult to imagine what the consequences of a collapse in the sugar industry would be. The white population would withdraw; the Revenue would fail; each Colony would become bankrupt; and the Imperial Government would be left with a group of Possessions of unbounded natural fertility, with nearly two million blacks and coloured persons unable from ignorance and helplessness to become self-reliant, and almost certain to relapse into barbarism as gross as that from which their Pagan progenitors were taken in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

It was with this prospect before him that Mr Chamberlain took office in 1895. These were the conditions on which he had to act in the West Indies, complicated, as events were to show, by disastrous hurricanes, and, in St Vincent, by de-

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vastating volcanic eruptions. He was deluged with clamorous representations of present distress and impending ruin. A vigorous agitation was set on foot throughout the West Indies in the hope of obtaining assistance from the Mother Country—the help to take the form of countervailing Duties on imported Bounty-fed sugar. Mr Chamberlain received these petitions with tactful sympathy; but before devising any machinery for relief he determined to get at the facts of the matter by a thorough and impartial investigation. The result was the appointment of the Royal Commission, of which General Sir H. W. Norman—a former and distinguished West Indian Governor—was Chairman, his colleagues being Sir David Barbour, an ex-Indian official of great financial and administrative experience, and Sir Edward Grey.

The Commissioners were instructed to ascertain whether, as a fact, the sugar industry was in danger of extinction; if so, they were to define the causes, and say whether, if these were removed, the business could be carried on profitably notwithstanding the Bounty system. They were to report whether, in the event of the discontinuance of sugar cultivation, other industries could be established—a branch of the question upon which they were to look for guidance to Dr Morris, of Kew, who was attached to the Commission as botanical expert. They were also to consider what effect the total or partial extinction of the sugar industry would have upon the community in the West Indies, and what subventions by way of relief would be necessary.

The Commissioners spent the spring of 1897 in the Caribbean Sea, and their Report was promptly published. They found that the sugar

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industry was in danger of great reduction, and, in some of the islands, of extinction. This was due principally to the competition of Bounty-aided beet sugar. The abandonment of estates was going on, and, if continued, would cause distress among the labouring population, and render the greater number of the Colonies unable to provide without external help for their own government and administration. In Barbados, Antigua, and St Kitts, there were no industries that could completely replace sugar. In Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana, St Lucia, and St Vincent, other industries might in time, and at the cost of much displacement of labour and consequent suffering, be substituted for sugar.

As to losses of Revenue from the cessation of sugar cultivation, only Jamaica, Trinidad, and Grenada could be expected to meet from their own resources the expenditure likely to fall on them. The Commissioners thought the best immediate remedy would be the abandonment of the Bounty system by Continental nations; but, in view of possible Tariff changes and the cheapening of the cost of the products of beet sugar, they were not sure that, even if Bounties were abolished, another crisis of a similar character might not arise hereafter. For a variety of reasons they were unable (Sir H. W. Norman dissenting) to recommend the imposition of countervailing Duties on Bounty-fed sugar imported into England. As to special remedies or measures of relief, they recommended the following:—

(1) The settlement of the labouring population on small plots of land as peasant proprietors; (2) the establishment of minor agricultural industries,

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and the improvement of the system of cultivation, especially in the case of small proprietors; (3) the improvement of the means of communication between the different islands; (4) the encouragement of a trade in fruit with New York, and, possibly, at a future time, with London; (5) the grant of a Loan from the Imperial Exchequer for the establishment of central factories in Barbados. The subject of emigration from the distressed tracts (they reported) also required the careful attention of the various Governments, though they did not find themselves in a position to make recommendations in detail. They calculated the cost of the special remedies recommended in (2), (3), and (4), at £27,000 a year for ten years, the expenditure to be borne by the Mother Country. They estimated the amount of the Loan to Barbados for the erection of central factories at £120,000. This measure, no doubt, involved a risk of loss. Grants would be required in Dominica and St Vincent for roads, and to enable the settlement of the labouring population on the land to be carried out, and the amount might be taken at £30,000. A further Grant of about £60,000 was required to clear off the floating debt in some of the smaller islands—which should, in addition, receive Grants to enable them to meet their ordinary expenditure of an obligatory nature. The amount might be placed at £20,000 a year for five years, and possibly a reduced amount for a further period of five years. The expenditure which the Commissioners were able to estimate might be summarised as follows:—(1) A Grant of £27,000 a year for ten years. (2) A Grant of £20,000 a year for five years. (3) Immediate Grants of £60,000 and £30,000, or £90,000 in all. (4) A Loan of £120,000 to

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Barbados for the establishment of central factories. As to the amount of expenditure which it might be necessary to incur in relieving distress (especially in British Guiana and Barbados) in promoting emigration, and in supporting and repatriating East Indian immigrants, they were unable at present to form any estimate, but it might be very great if there occurred a sudden and general failure of the sugar industry in Barbados and British Guiana, where the population was comparatively large, and the people so dependent upon the cultivation of the sugar-cane. In such a contingency neither British Guiana nor Barbados would be able to meet the necessary cost of administration, for, probably, a considerable number of years.

A little exercise of the faculty of imagination will enable the reader to judge the magnitude as well as the complexity of Mr Chamberlain's task. Essentially it was this: how best, by timely political action and financial help, to prevent the West Indies from becoming a group of pauper communities and a permanent drain upon the Imperial Exchequer. He set to work on two parallel lines —first, the removal of the element of unfair competition created by Bounty-giving Powers, and, secondly, the utilisation of the natural resources of the Colonies by the population.

Mr Chamberlain used the Report of the Commission as an unanswerable argument with the Treasury—which would have to provide the funds in the event of a collapse in the West Indies—for summoning yet another International Conference on the Bounty System. Lord Salisbury took the lead in getting a Conference together, and it met at Brussels in June 1898. The Cabinet, however, with an excess of caution due to fears of Free

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Trade agitation, which certainly were not entertained by the Colonial Secretary, declined to arm our Delegates with the one weapon by which the Bounty-giving countries could be brought to reason —a threat that if the Bounties were continued retaliatory action by the British Government would follow. Sir F. Plunkett, Sir H. Bergne, Lord Ampthill, and Mr E. C. Ozanne (with whom Sir Neville Lubbock and Mr G. Martineau were associated as expert advisers) were instructed to maintain "an attitude of reserve" on this point. There was some fencing at the Conference, but the other States declined to be impressed by an attitude so feeble and mysterious, and did not believe that the British Government was or would be in earnest in "prosecuting any ulterior measures," the Conference came to nothing. Our Delegates returned empty-handed. But when Mr Chamberlain cannot carry a position by a frontal attack he does not rest until he has found an opening on the flank.

The condition of Mauritius supplied him with an opportunity. The sugar industry of that island was languishing because its product had been excluded from India—its chief market—by imports of Bounty-fed sugar from Europe. The dangers there were similar to those in the West Indies. Mr Chamberlain represented them to the Indian Office, and Lord George Hamilton referred the matter to Lord Elgin. The Viceroy's answer was that, though the Indian Government was prepared to join an International Conference on Bounties, it did not see its way to levy countervailing Duties in the interests of Mauritius. Again Mr Chamberlain had to wait, but when Lord Curzon of Kedleston became Viceroy, in 1898, and the Brussels Conference had proved

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abortive, he attacked the subject vigorously, plying the India Office with representations as to the critical condition of Mauritius and the West Indies—the latter, be it noted, a profitable labour market under the indenture system for some of the surplus population of the East. The new Viceroy boldly reversed the policy of his predecessor, and, in March 1899, passed a Bill through the Council imposing countervailing Duties forthwith.

Mr Chamberlain had thus done a good stroke of business for Mauritius (and incidentally for the native sugar producers of India) and had made it clear to the Bounty-giving Powers that he did not mean to allow our Colonies to be further injured by an indefensible system of competition. Having thus inserted a tolerably thick wedge, he proceeded to drive it home, finding incontrovertible arguments against inaction in the increasing financial straits of the West Indies, which were undoubtedly going from bad to worse —a fact the planters did not permit either the Colonial Office or the public to forget. Reinforced by further facts, by sheaves of Resolutions from the West Indies, Anti-Bounty Leagues and the like, Mr Chamberlain again concerted with his colleagues, with the object of obtaining a resumption of the Brussels Conference on such conditions as were likely to render failure improbable. The Delegates were reassembled early in 1902, the British representatives on this occasion being empowered to announce that retaliation against the Bounty system would be adopted by our Government. In consequence of this action an agreement was reached with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden for the suppression of

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Bounties on exported sugar from 1st September 1903. A Convention embodying this result was signed on 5th March, and a Bill to carry its provisions into effect was passed last Session (1903).*

The Convention has been sharply criticised in all the countries which are parties to it (Russia and the United States, it will be observed, did not attend the Conference), and in no country has it been more sharply attacked than in England, not so much because of any infringement of the principles of Free Trade, as because its critics consider it as being badly drafted and more provocative of mischief than conducive to the commercial advantage of the Empire. Mr Gibson Bowles has been the most ingenious of its assailants, and it must be admitted that the holes he has picked in it are not easily to be mended. Be that as it may, Mr Chamberlain had succeeded, so far as Diplomacy could succeed in such a task, in removing from the West Indies a crushing disability. He had secured the abolition of Bounties in Europe, thus uprooting what the sugar interest regarded as the primary, if not the sole, cause of its troubles.

The gratitude of the planters did not deter them from claiming further assistance, on the plea that it was impossible for them to live without help until September 1903. This was afforded them in 1902, when Mr Chamberlain obtained from Parliament a subvention of £250,000 to be used in making advances to enable the cultivators to keep their estates going until they should receive the expected benefits from the Conven-

* Mr Chamberlain took an active part in the discussions. The Measure, it should be mentioned, was attacked as an infringement of Free Trade principles and defended as a practical vindication of them—as helping to bring about the sale of sugar at its natural value.

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tion. Telegrams of thanks and congratulation poured in upon Mr Chamberlain from the West Indies. The Convention was everywhere recognised as his work—as the result of his personal grasp of West Indian problems, his sympathetic comprehension of the needs of the islands. "Accept grateful thanks, results Brussels Conference," "Thanks for persistent efforts to obtain fair play for the sugar industry of British Colonies," "High appreciation and thanks . . . for untiring efforts and strong interest evinced in promoting general welfare," "Congratulations and thanks for your good services," "Grateful thanks for your services," "High appreciation and gratitude"—these, and many more like them, were the messages from legislative bodies and public meetings. Never had a Colonial Minister been so popular—certainly not in the West Indies, where it had long been the fashion to think bitterly, and speak and write sneeringly, of the Colonial Office. Never had these Colonies been in so grateful and pleasant a mood; never so less mindful had the sugar interest been of its grudge against the Parent State for having liberated the slaves—at a fancy valuation from the standpoint of an Imperial taxpayer, but with contemptible niggardliness from that of the "old time" sugar lords.

Within the Colonies themselves, the chief problem of Statesmanship is, if possible, to make the negro populations self-supporting in the event of further restriction of the area of sugar cultivation. The Commissioners had recommended the creation of a negro peasant proprietary—the throwing open of the Crown lands, the systematic settlement of the people under conditions in which they could at least grow their own food, and produce for ex-

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port. To a limited extent, and in Jamaica to a liberal degree, there was a peasant proprietary in each of the Colonies already; but the negro peasant had, generally speaking, been left to find a way to prosperity for himself; and this the West Indian negro, in the mass, is unable to do, for he is a child both in character and intellect, and must be guided and even pushed along the path of progress. It was little good putting him on the land without teaching him how to make use of it.

Dr Morris, the technical adviser of the Commission, had mapped out a scheme for the establishment of a Department of Economic Botany and for Agricultural Instruction. Mr Chamberlain put this into operation, and placed Dr Morris at its head. That gentleman has since been at work with a competent staff, extending the usefulness of the existing botanic stations—alike for the sugar planters and followers of the minor industries—establishing new stations, encouraging in a variety of ways the theoretical and practical study of agriculture, and endeavouring, through the elementary schools, to raise up a generation of creoles who shall not consider it derogatory to till the soil. It was a vital part of the scheme that it should be in operation for ten years: it will be time enough to talk about results when it has been at work for thrice that period. But something has already been done in remodelling the system of education, and in the practical teaching of Tropical agriculture. Should the sugar industry at any future time fail, the foundations will have been laid for industries by which the negro can at least avert starvation. If he does not do so he will suffer by his own fault; and nothing could be worse for the negro than to be relieved from economic compulsion to labour.

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Having set the new Department at work, Mr Chamberlain stirred up the stagnant waters of West Indian officialdom, directing economies, expenditure on roads, and means of communication, and, generally, breathing new life and vigour into the Administrations. He tried to interest British capitalists in the starting of central factories, to which the peasant should sell the crops of the cane farms; but the time was not ripe. Capital was shy, the owners of it preferring to wait until the Bounty system should have fallen. In like manner, Mr Chamberlain had endeavoured to encourage the flow of capital for the exploitation of the mineral and other resources of British Guiana; but though a company was locally formed with the object of obtaining a charter from the Crown, the matter fell into abeyance.

Though with these larger projects ever in view, Mr Chamberlain worked steadily at practical and immediate reforms, helping the more distressed Colonies by Grants in aid of Revenue, establishing an inter-Colonial steamer service, and, while keeping a tight hand on local expenditure, pushing forward such public works as were likely to facilitate settlement in the Crown lands. His labours were complicated in 1898 by a severe hurricane which devastated part of Barbados, St Vincent, and St Lucia, and caused heavy financial loss and acute distress. Relief measures were promptly put in action, a Mansion House Fund opened, and the islands thus enabled to tide over the crisis. Ordinances were passed for granting loans to assist the sufferers to re-start cultivation; and on this matter Mr Chamberlain's business instincts acted as a wholesome check upon the fondness of the West Indian for putting his hand into the public purse without giving sufficient

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security for repayment. Nearly £45,000 was sent to the islands from the Mansion House, and in the following year Mr Chamberlain introduced and carried through the House of Commons a Colonial Loans Bill by which, *inter alia*, £100,000 was advanced to Barbados and St Vincent under the provisions of the local ordinances. Unhappily, this hurricane was not the only disaster which hampered Mr Chamberlain in his attempts to promote the welfare of the West Indies. In May, 1902, there occurred the terrible eruption of Mont Pelée—destroying the town of St Pierre, and reducing the French Colony of Martinique to a volcanic ruin—and the scarcely less violent outburst of the Soufrière of St Vincent, a disaster in which 2000 British subjects, mostly negro settlers, lost their lives. Again, Mr Chamberlain had to organise Relief measures, and once more the Lord Mayor opened a Fund to enable the survivors to repair the losses they had suffered. The details of the Colonial Secretary's action need not be entered into: it is enough to say that his measures were energetic, and that his sympathy was not only verbal, but also practical and effective. Further eruptions occurred during the year, and the Northern portion of the island of St Vincent was rendered uninhabitable.

Mr Chamberlain has thus had to reckon not only with economic depression but also with havoc wrought by the violence of nature. Cataclysms, such as certain parts of the West Indies have experienced, re-act to the disadvantage of the whole group of Colonies. Capital draws no fine distinctions between the regions which are volcanic or lie in the path of cyclones and those which are exempt from such risks. Guiana, Jamaica, Trinidad, and other Colonies where nature is

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pacific, are liable to remain unfertilised by British gold because others in those latitudes are subject to catastrophe. This fact, no doubt, has had much to do with Mr Chamberlain's comparative failure to stimulate the flow of fresh capital to these "undeveloped estates."

Another factor is to be found in distrust of the vigour and competence of the local Administrations. Mr Chamberlain has done a great deal to remove this feeling by showing that Colonial Office control is a reality—that the local Councils are not to be allowed to mismanage their affairs at their own pleasure. Jamaica furnishes the most conspicuous case in point. Its finances when he came into office were in deplorable confusion, and bankruptcy was impending. After the Royal Commission had done its work, and, incidentally, had revealed the fact that some of the misfortunes of the island were self-inflicted, he sent Sir David Barbour to discover what retrenchments were advisable.

Sir David's report was, in effect, an indictment of the Government of the island, which, it should be said, has a majority of Elective members on the Legislative Council, and hankers after a restoration of Representative Institutions, for which the population had been, and still is, quite unfitted. The island Government was blamed for taking over the Railway, and entering into a contract for its extension, and it was shown that the official element had been unable to prevent a bad bargain being made, drastic recommendations were made for reorganising the Revenue and Expenditure, and more vigilant Imperial control was suggested.

To the disgust of the Elective members, Mr Chamberlain acted upon this Report, directing fresh Revenue legislation, and plainly informing

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the people that henceforth he would exercise control over their finances. To enable him to do this, he instructed the Governor (Sir Augustus Hemming) to nominate members of the Legislature, and keep them there to pass such Votes and Measures as the Colonial Office might regard as of paramount importance. The Elective members talked of resigning in a body. Mr Chamberlain took no heed of the outcry beyond controverting the arguments submitted to him by local political associations. When the Elective members made difficulties about passing the new Tariff Bill which he had required of them, four unofficial members were nominated, so as to enable the Government to outvote the Electives. Thereupon the agitation came to an end. Pledges of reasonable behaviour were forthcoming, and on the strength of these the Nominated members were, on the initiative of the Governor, withdrawn, and the Bill was passed.

For a time the situation was disagreeable, for the *amour propre* of the Jamaicans was wounded, and there is a good deal of latent political feeling in the Colony which excitable persons might have turned to mischievous account. The Governor became very uneasy as to the consequences of a prolongation of the dispute. A weaker man than Mr Chamberlain might have given way, and let the islanders blunder on from bad to worse. Not only their interests, however, but also those of the Imperial taxpayer, were at stake, for actual insolvency would have meant heavier drafts upon the Home Exchequer; and Mr Chamberlain was not the sort of man to temporise with such a situation. "Let it be clearly understood," he telegraphed, "that it is my instruction that Government Measures, when fully considered and

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judged of paramount importance, must be passed." He was not pleased that Sir Augustus Hemming had arranged matters with the Electives and withdrawn the Nominated members without his sanction; both then and later he threatened that Constitutional changes would be made if the Elective members were again obstructive. Since then affairs have quieted down. Jamaica has paid the price of Imperial assistance in the form of political obedience. Under the rigorous control of the Colonial Office, financial stability is once more in sight. The island, indeed, has a tolerably safe future, even if her sugar mills should cease to crush the cane.

It is the fault of her own people that her fortunes are not more secure than they are. By their indolence they have done much to bring discredit upon their fruit industry. If it had not been for American enterprise, the fruit trade of Jamaica would be of small account; and the trouble that the Americans have had to drive into the Jamaican brain the fact that fruit for export must be skilfully selected, and carefully picked and handled, would scarcely be credited in any ordinary white commercial community. This is not, however, the place to enter into that question: what we are concerned with is Mr Chamberlain's policy of encouraging a direct fruit trade between Jamaica and England, where the people have acquired a taste for the banana, and would be far greater consumers of the fruit but for the rapacity of the urban shopkeeper, who, particularly in the West End of London, has made "a dead set" against the Jamaican product.

The story of the Colonial Secretary's efforts is summarised in the contract made in April 1900,

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between the Crown Agents for the Colonies and Messrs Elder, Dempster, & Co. of Liverpool. In return for a subsidy of £40,000 for the first year, and £30,000 a year subsequently, the contractors undertook to provide and maintain for ten years a fortnightly service of British steamers for the carriage of fruit, passengers, and mails, between Jamaica and the United Kingdom, the vessels to be of a fine type and equipment, with accommodation for a hundred first-class, and fifty second-class passengers, and special suitability for the carriage of perishable produce.

The contract is an elaborate document which need not be analysed in detail. It is a good example, however, of Mr Chamberlain's method of pressing business principles into the service of Statesmanship. He saw that there were various ways in which Jamaica could be assisted —that what she needed was direct fast steamship communication with England, for the double purpose of finding a market here for her fruit, and of stimulating the tourist traffic to the island, and that she required more skill in the choice and shipment of the fruit, and better hotels in which to lodge the tourists. The contract provides for all these things. The shipowners, for example, are bound by stringent conditions as to the purchase and freight rates of fruit, and manner of carriage; and they have to provide, for the duration of the contract, not less than six experienced agents for the instruction of fruit growers, in cultivation, harvesting, and packing. Should the Colonial Government enter into the business of hotel ownership, the contractors are to pay one-fourth of the outlay on hotels, provided that their liability does not exceed £10,000. The transaction was with the Imperial Government, and the subsidy

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is paid in equal shares by Great Britain and by the Colony.

The services were inaugurated in February 1901, the shipowners being, it should be said, under the obligation of carrying 20,000 bunches of bananas—a bunch as cut from the main stem of the plant—every fortnight. During the twelve months of 1901-1902, the Direct Line carried 643,846 bunches, of the value of £48,288, and over five and a half million of oranges, of the value of £7294. The total value of the fruit carried in the holds of these vessels in the period under review was £59,074, 10s. The Royal Mail Line carried, in the same time, fruit to the value of £5524. The following passage is taken from Mr Sydney Olivier's last published Report on Jamaica:—

"So far as the actual addition made to the volume of the fruit trade is concerned, the effect of this experiment might not appear considerable. The quantity of bananas carried is less than one quarter of the mere increase in the export of that staple for the year, and had the fruit not been sent to England it would doubtless have gone, though possibly at some loss of price, to the United States. Important results have, however, been achieved, in regard to the development and prospects of the fruit-growing industry. It has been proved that bananas can be carried to England in a marketable condition. It has been proved that a large demand for them may be expected at a paying price, and an independent Company has been formed to run without a subsidy, a second fortnightly service for the purchase of from 30,000 to 40,000 bunches each trip. It is recognised by all concerned that if such ventures are to be successful the volume of the trade must be multiplied by a large factor,

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and those who have invested large capital in the enterprise are well qualified and determined to effect this. As yet, however, the value of the fruit exported to England is little more than 6 per cent. of the total. For the sale of the balance we have still to rely entirely on the American market." *

The English market, however, should be able to take as much West Indian fruit as the American. That depends on three factors—the degree of intelligence that the Jamaican growers, packers, and shippers put into their business, the growth of the taste for tropical fruit in England, and the facilities for distribution to the consumer at a cheap rate; and in this last matter the costermonger with a barrow-load of bananas is a better friend to the West Indies than the West End shopkeeper, who endeavours to restrict trade to such fruit as he can handle at a large profit.

Nor was it only by pledging Imperial resources to the development of the fruit trade and tourist traffic that Mr Chamberlain sought to benefit Jamaica. The Colonial Loans Act of 1899 bore an item of £65,000 for public works, such as the sewering and street reconstruction of Kingston; another of £150,000 in aid of Revenue; another of £198,000 for the completion of the railway and payment of interest on debentures of the line, and yet another of £40,000 for waterworks and irrigation services. People who are disposed to sympathise with the agitation in Jamaica for the restoration of full Representative Government will

* Since this Report was published the prospects of the Island have been ruined, for, at least, another year, by a terrible hurricane in August 1903. In order to provide against such disasters it has been proposed to set up, with Government guarantee, a system of public insurance—the planters who refuse to contribute being disentitled to relief.

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doubtless, when reflecting upon these figures and the extent to which the British taxpayer has come to the assistance of the Colony, agree with Mr Chamberlain that Colonial Office control is just and necessary. That the Imperial investment will be remunerative in the long run there is good reason to believe. The £110,000 advanced to Trinidad under the Colonial Loans Bill for railways and public works is, for example, as sound a business transaction as any entered into on behalf of Jamaica.

As for the Imperial assistance granted to the West Indies on account of the failure of Revenue and special circumstances such as hurricanes and eruptions, the money has been spent with the object of averting the necessity for still greater disbursements in the future, for the Imperial Government, even if it wished, cannot escape from its responsibilities in the West Indies. Their condition is due in some measure to past neglect in Downing Street, as well as to the want of self-reliance, initiative, and energy in their population. The whites had been brought to poverty partly through the failure of the Home Government to redress the injustice caused by the bounty system; the negroes were wrenched from their West African homes under the sanction of the Imperial Government, and freed by the Government against the will of the class which by ownership of them had become responsible for their welfare. After emancipation they had been left to get on as best they could without the care and guidance which their condition and prospects called for. It was with the approval of the Imperial Government that the Asiatic element was imported into the region, and with the connivance of the Home authorities that

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the entire group of Colonies was administered primarily in the interests of a single industry.

Imperial responsibility is written in large letters from Jamaica to Guiana, and what this would mean —in cash to be taken from the pockets of the English taxpayer—in the event of further retrogression in the West Indies it is not easy to estimate. It has been Mr Chamberlain's task to avert that obligation, to bring Parliament to realise the possible liability, and to act with large, but yet prudent and business-like, liberality. He has succeeded so well that no one whose judgment is worth considering is any longer content to let the West Indies drift into ruin and anarchy—and that is what would have happened in time, for the negro, bereft of the capital and guidance of the white man, would relapse into barbarism almost as rapidly as an abandoned cane-field becomes covered with the rank undergrowth of the Tropics. Mr Chamberlain's work has been attended by such good result in the Colonies themselves that the whites are no longer thinking of abandoning their properties, but, on the contrary, are looking forward to a new era of comparative prosperity; and the negroes, the coloured people, and the Asiatics have the prospect of a certain livelihood, either as labourers for wages or as independent peasant cultivators. Though it is yet too early to say that the sugar industry in the West Indies is permanently saved, and that the economic and social dangers attending its extinction may not even yet confront some future Government, these Colonies are no longer travelling full speed astern, as they were when Mr Chamberlain assumed the direction of their course in 1895.

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CHAPTER XVI

WEST AFRICAN POSSESSIONS

WHEN Mr Chamberlain took office he found that the barbarous rule of King Prempeh constituted a barrier which had to be broken down before the Gold Coast Colony could be regarded as safe from savage aggression. The martial and valiant Ashantis had forgotten the lesson taught them by Sir Garnet Wolseley a score of years before, and, not content with repudiating their Indemnity obligations, had again blocked the trade with the interior upon which the prosperity of the Coast Colony was dependent. Remonstrances were useless, and the then Governor, Sir W. E. Maxwell, urged the necessity, on defensive grounds, of bringing the Ashanti Confederacy to reason.

There was also a broader reason for a forward policy. The French Government were actively at work, extending their West African Empire from Senegal behind the British Colonies, and it was only a question of time for Ashantiland to fall into their hands. The question was not merely whether we should allow Prempeh to cripple the trade of the Gold Coast, and endeavour to sweep the white race into the sea from the North, but also whether we should permit such conditions to continue as would favour

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French ambitions at our expense—if, indeed, these would not, in the long run, make it obligatory upon France to deal with Prempeh, and add his territories to the French domain. While these difficulties were coming to a head, the Rosebery Government had temporised with them, sending an Ultimatum which Prempeh insolently defied, but taking no decisive action.

Mr Chamberlain made up his mind that Ashanti truculence should be tolerated no longer, and that the French policy—a perfectly legitimate one—of hemming in the Gold Coast, should be counteracted by a seizure of the Hinterland. To give Prempeh one more chance, he sent a Mission requesting him to accept a British Protectorate and receive a British Resident at Kumasi. He was allowed until 31st October 1895 to comply with this demand. Acting under the advice of two Coast negroes, "Prince John" and "Prince Ansah"—two products of missionary schools who had intrigued themselves into Prempeh's confidence, and placed their brains and knowledge of civilisation at his service—Prempeh turned the Mission back. Meanwhile, these two negroes came to London in the hope of turning Mr Chamberlain from his purpose. Sir William Maxwell had, however, kept Mr Chamberlain informed of the true status and character of the sable envoys, and the Colonial Secretary shut the door of Downing Street upon them.

No answer being forthcoming to the Ultimatum, an Expedition was prepared by the end of the year, and on 5th January 1896, Sir Francis Scott led it into Ashantiland. To the astonishment of every one, he had a peaceful promenade to Kumasi, which was entered on 17th January.

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The King was found in a drunken state, and it was probably due to his cowardice and lack of the vigorous qualities which had distinguished his predecessors on the Stool, as well as to dissensions among feudatories who rejected his authority, that opposition had not been offered to Sir Francis Scott's little army. The warlike spirit of the Ashantis seemed to have evaporated. The King was compelled to make his submission amid circumstances of humiliation such as would impress the imagination of his people. For the first time in the history of this fierce confederacy, the head of an Ashanti Ruler was placed beneath the foot of the European. The scene in the market-place of Kumasi, and the military spectacle by which the lesson of British mastery was enforced, the reeking Fetish slaughter grove, where the Pagan gods of the Ashantis had been lavishly propitiated with human flesh, in the vain hope of averting the downfall of the Kingdom, need not be described. It is enough to say that the King and his wives were deported to the coast and exiled, a British resident seated in his Capital, a Protectorate proclaimed, and troops sent out Northward to make it effective over the tributary Chiefs of Ashanti.

France, meanwhile, was pushing down from the North, and there was a race between the British and Senegalese forces to establish effective occupation over as large an area of Hinterland as each could traverse. The chief obstacle to both was a powerful Arab slave-trader named Samory, who raided and plundered in the spheres of both Powers impartially. Our occupation of Wa led to a dramatic incident. Lieut. Henderson and Mr Ferguson, a civilian official,

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went out from that station to visit certain distant tribes with whom Treaties had been made, and were attacked in overwhelming strength by Samory. They fell back upon Wa, and were besieged there. Lieut. Henderson went alone into Samory's camp to treat for peace—one of the pluckiest of many courageous acts in the obscure story of West African extension. Samory kept him a prisoner for a month, and sent him with an escort down to the coast. Wa had, however, to be abandoned, and Mr Ferguson, who unfortunately had been wounded, was dropped and left by his carriers during the retreat, and decapitated by the enemy. An Expedition under Col. Northcote was sent later on, but Samory was in trouble with the French, and had moved away.

The overthrow of King Prempeh was followed by the inclusion of Ashanti in the British Empire, and of the Northern regions beyond the Kingdom, now known as the Northern Territories. The result of Mr Chamberlain's "forward" policy was to expand the Gold Coast Colony and Hinterland by more than 100,000 square miles, with a population of over 2,000,000. Unfortunately, the Golden Stool of Ashanti remained secreted among the tribes, and the inability to discover it led later on to serious difficulties. Before, however, these developments are described, it will be well to see what Mr Chamberlain did to consolidate British authority in the region, and prepare the way for its commercial development. Colonel Northcote, who subsequently lost his life in the South African War, was made Commissioner and Commandant General of the Northern Territories, and, pending the frontier arrangements with France, pushed out columns

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in all directions to make our occupation effective among the recalcitrant feudatory tribes of Ashanti, and against the ever active Senegalese who were carrying the French flag into the British sphere. District Commissioners were stationed throughout the Protectorates, and stringent legislation passed for the suppression of traffic in arms, and of native assemblies that menaced the preservation of Peace. Coincident with this military and executive activity, surveys were undertaken for the construction of railways through the mining and timber districts, and on to Kumasi. Government stores were established to inculcate in the people of the interior a taste for merchandise (spirits, by the way, were excluded from the Protectorates), encouragement given to traders and prospectors, and a Land Bill passed for regulating cessions of territory for mining.

Some of this work meant heavy Imperial grants, which Mr Chamberlain had to justify in the House of Commons, but the results were satisfactory. The mining industry of the Gold Coast Colony received a remarkable impetus—such an impetus, in fact, that it attracted certain speculators on the Coast, and in the City of London, against whom Mr Chamberlain eventually found it desirable to warn the investing public. Trade also increased, and, with the settlement of the political difficulties with France, an era of peace and progress seemed to have set in for the Colony. Amid these circumstances, the railway projects were steadily prosecuted, and in the Colonial Loans Act of 1899, a sum of £578,000 was allotted to the line from Sekondi to the gold-mining district of Tarquah, and for preliminary work in connection with lines from Tarquah to Kumasi, from Appam to Kumasi, and from

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Accra to the Volta; and a further sum of £98,000 for improving the harbour at Accra.

The prospects of the Colony were, however, suddenly overshadowed by a formidable Ashanti rising in the Spring of 1900. The Governor, Sir F. M. Hodgson, whose administrative experience had been solely with negroes of a pacific type, seems to have conceived the idea that valuable service would be done to the Empire if he could unearth the sacrosanct Ashanti Stool. He does not appear to have been kept adequately informed of the true state of feeling among the Ashanti Chiefs and people, who had various grievances, and, more or less secretly, were burning to obliterate the disgrace they conceived themselves to have incurred by yielding to the British power in 1896 without resistance. In this state of ignorance and optimism, he went to Kumasi, accompanied by Lady Hodgson and a small body-guard. The grievances were to be disposed of, the Stool brought to the Coast, and the Ashantis, deprived of their renowned symbol, reduced for ever to childlike submission.

There was a great assemblage of native Chiefs at Kumasi on 28th March, when Sir F. Hodgson lectured them in the imperious style which it is safe to employ towards the negro only when he knows that you possess the power to crush him. In language picturesque enough for comic opera, Sir F. M. Hodgson demanded an instalment of the 50,000 ounces of gold that a former generation of Chiefs had undertaken to pay after the Wolseley Expedition, and the delivery of the Golden Stool. "Where is the Golden Stool?" asked the Governor. "Why am I not sitting on the Golden Stool at this moment? I am the representative of the Paramount Power;

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why have you relegated me to this chair? Why did you not take the opportunity of my coming to Kumasi to bring the Golden Stool and give it to me to sit upon?"

The Chiefs, who had long been secreting arms and ammunition, were not in a mood to be cowed. When, therefore, Sir F. M. Hodgson, acting upon information which seems to have been invented for the purpose, sent a detachment to find the Stool in one of two villages supposed to contain it, the Ashantis intercepted the troops and they only found their way back to Kumasi after severe fighting and with heavy loss. The whole country rose in revolt. Sir F. M. Hodgson endeavoured to negotiate with the Chiefs, but they would have nothing to say to him, and besieged Kumasi. Fortunately, a body of 700 native troops were able to get into the place before the investment was completed, and thus the risk of Kumasi being rushed was reduced; but the situation Mr Chamberlain had to deal with was humiliating as well as critical. The Governor had placed his head in the jaws of the Ashanti monster.

Mr Chamberlain acted with his characteristic promptitude, pouring troops into the Gold Coast from all parts of South Africa. He entrusted Colonel (now Sir James) Willcocks with the command. But it was not until 26th May that the Colonel could arrive at the coast, and June passed before relief operations could be undertaken. Meanwhile the Kumasi garrison were enduring terrible straits with no hope of speedy alleviation, and the Governor courageously determined that their only chance was to break out of the place or perish in the attempt. They had borne a close siege for two months, and death was preferable

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to starvation amid the horrors and stenches of Kumasi. Leaving a garrison in the Fort with provisions for twenty-four days, they filed out on the night of 22nd June, and almost miraculously got through the enemy's stockade without being annihilated. A few days' marching and fighting through the bush brought the column to the friendly King of N'Kwanta, and thence, after a rest, they reached the Offin River, which they crossed in flood and obtained comparative safety in the Gold Coast Colony.

When the news of the Governor's escape reached Colonel Willcocks at Fumsu on 4th July —whither he had had to fight his way amid terrible difficulties—he telegraphed to Mr Chamberlain that, under any circumstances, he would relieve Kumasi by 15th July, at which date the provisions would all have been consumed by the garrison. He kept his word, fighting all the way, rushing stockade after stockade, and successfully accomplishing as arduous and dangerous bit of work as had ever fallen to a West African Commander. He found the garrison reduced to the last straits: nor did the re-establishment of British authority at Kumasi end the War. Almost the entire Northern territories had to be conquered as well as Ashantiland proper, and not until the end of the year, and then only after very severe fighting, in which the Ashantis showed their traditional courage and skill, and in which several British and native officers brilliantly distinguished themselves, was the rising quelled.

In a military sense the work was thoroughly and, so far as can be foreseen, finally done. The Ashantis had never before been soundly beaten. The Wolseley Expedition had burned the Capital and hastened back to the coast; dissension among

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the Chiefs and the inebriate cowardice of Prempeh had reduced the Scott Expedition to a promenade; but this time the Ashantis were hit so hard that—so, at least, it seemed and still seems—we need never fear another Ashanti revolt on a grand scale. When Sir F. M. Hodgson returned to England on leave, he wrote an interesting Despatch in defence of his action, the point of it being that the Ashanti Chiefs had long premeditated and prepared for revolt, and that he had not known of it.

In Sierra Leone also Mr Chamberlain had to grapple with an alarming rebellion. An agreement with France in 1895 had secured for the Colony a Hinterland about as large as Ireland, and swarming with negroes of an independent type of character. The problem before the Colonial Office was twofold — that of policing and administering the region, and getting out of it at least some proportion of the cost of Government. The tribes, in fact, were to pay for their own police. As they had no very ardent desire for white protection, the problem of taxation was not easy.

The Governor of the Colony was Sir Frederick Cardew, a military man with a clear appreciation of hard facts, and a somewhat heavy hand. He and Mr Chamberlain devised a Protectorate Ordinance under which each hut was to pay a tax of five shillings a year, and the huts of Chiefs ten shillings. The Frontier Police were employed as tax-collectors, and trouble broke out, the natives finding a capable leader in a chief named Bai Burch. There is the usual conflict of evidence as to whether the rebellion was really due to the Hut Tax, or whether it was not an attempt to expel the British from the interior

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because of the official suppression of slave-raiding and other practices inconsistent with European ideas. Bai Burch's supporters murdered all the white missionaries upon whom they could lay hands, and massacred friendly natives without compunction. Punitive operations followed, and there was much inglorious fighting, extending over many months before Bai Burch was captured and the country subdued.

Meanwhile, people in England loudly complained that the Hut Tax was an injustice, and that Mr Chamberlain and Sir F. Cardew had blundered into bloodshed. Before the War was over Mr Chamberlain so far yielded to the criticisms on his policy as to appoint the late Sir David P. Chalmers to inquire into the cause of the insurrection, and to recommend what should be done in the future. Sir David Chalmers had seen many years' judicial service in a part of the Empire where the negro has forgotten how to fight. He took a philosophic rather than a practical view of his mission, and produced a Report crowded with irreproachable sentiments. It was, in effect, a condemnation, on broad principles of abstract justice, of the policy of the Colonial Office. He did not believe that interference with the Slave Trade was a factor in the rising. He attributed the troubles to Sir F. Cardew's high-handed treatment of the Chiefs, and the imposition and not always tactful enforcement of the Hut Tax; and as to the injustice and inexpediency of that impost, he took a view which Bai Burch himself could hardly have improved upon.

Sir David suggested that punitive operations should cease, that a general Amnesty should be proclaimed, that the edifice of administration by

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District Commissioners should be razed, that the Chiefs should be restored to authority, that the Frontier Police should be withdrawn—that, in short, the Hinterland should be left to itself except for such missionaries as might be encouraged to settle in it, who were to be subsidised by Government, if they would add the teaching of simple handicrafts and the growing of vegetables to the theological instruction which they gave to the negroes. It was a charming Report, instinct with the warm-hearted humanitarianism of a pious Scotch gentleman, who had won the respect and admiration of all who knew him in the course of his long and distinguished career in the service of the Crown; but it was out of harmony with certain ugly facts. The reasons on which this criticism is based, may in part be found in an elaborate controversial analysis of the Report by Sir F. Cardew. It is enough to say that, had Sir David's recommendations been acted upon, the British power would have become a negligible quantity in the Hinterland.

With such a Report before him, Mr Chamberlain had to make up his mind whether Sir F. Cardew should be removed, the Hut Tax revoked, and the interior left almost to itself, or whether Sir David Chalmers' Report should be disregarded. He decided upon the latter course, and set forth his reasons in a Despatch of unwonted vigour. Its general argument was that the obligations of Great Britain under the General Act of the Berlin Conference made it incumbent upon us to police and administer the interior; that what the natives needed was firm and direct control, that the rising had shown the necessity for that control being strengthened rather than weakened, that the

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Hut Tax was equitable and well within the taxable capacity of the people, and that the policy and conduct of Sir F. Cardew had on the whole been just, and such as the circumstances demanded. A decision such as this is best judged by its fruits, and the only comment which need here be made is that the Hut Tax has since been collected without trouble. The country was pacified without very great difficulty after Bai Burch fell into British hands, and events have since justified Mr Chamberlain's policy.

The War, no doubt, might have been averted if we had disregarded our obligations under the Berlin Act, as well as our political and commercial interests in this part of West Africa: most quarrels can be avoided if one of the parties will meekly suffer self-effacement. But Mr Chamberlain is remarkable for the readiness with which he incurs rather than evades responsibility; with such a man at the Colonial Office, the establishment of a permanent British administration in the Hinterland was inevitable, be the local risks small or great. They were faced, and they were overcome. Mr Chamberlain had the necessary faith in himself to pursue his policy to its logical conclusion, notwithstanding the arguments of his own Commissioner and the attacks upon the Colonial Office to which that document gave official sanction. And the result is that our authority in the interior is unlikely to be seriously contested in future, and that the natives are themselves contributing about £30,000 a year in Hut Taxes to the maintenance of the Protectorate.

The trade of the Colony naturally suffered from the War, and recuperation has been slower than was hoped; but Mr Chamberlain has done what he could to help the country on the path

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of progress. Under the Colonial Loans Act, Sierra Leone obtained £310,000 for the extension of the railway from Freetown *viâ* Rotofunk to Moyamba. This line is now open for a length of over fifty miles, and a further extension of eighty miles is in course of construction. From first to last the Imperial Government has authorised Loans amounting to over £900,000 for this railway, which is expected not only to facilitate trade with the interior, but also to simplify the work of administration there. As the military expenditure on the Protectorate has been over £20,000 a year since 1898, and the civil expenditure has increased from about £10,000 to £24,000, some years must elapse before the Protectorate can pay its way. But the Revenue has risen from nearly £8000 in 1898 to over £38,000 in 1901, and, given a continuance of Peace, Sierra Leone and the Protectorate may be expected to attain a satisfactory level of prosperity, though, in the most favourable circumstances, it is not so promising a field for development as some neighbouring estates of Empire. No Colonial Minister can, however, alter the geographical and racial conditions in which he has to work. He can but make the best of them.

Wherever one turns in West Africa, it will be found that Mr Chamberlain has had to suppress turbulence and savagery. The rifle, the bayonet, and the Maxim have been the necessary precursors of the civil administrator. Peaceful development has not been possible. Where Mr Chamberlain's hand has not been forced by native truculence, he has been led into conflict by the ardour of his subordinates. The massacre near Benin is a case in point. That an unarmed party, without escort, should have proceeded

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to that Ju-Ju stronghold was a rashness such as Englishmen often commit. Phillips, Maling, Cawford, Campbell, Elliot, Powis, and Gordon paid for their error with their lives; only Boisragon and Locke escaped the slaughter which overtook the leaders and the little column of carriers. A punitive expedition was, of course, necessary, and this was brilliantly carried through by Rear-Admiral Harry Rawson, who found the city of Benin little better than a shambles. A wide district was relieved from the terrorism exercised from Benin. The Chiefs from the surrounding districts seemed only too glad to make their submission; but two notorious headsmen—Ologbosheri and Abohun—who had been directly implicated in the massacre remained in the fastnesses of the Delta swamps.

It was at this stage that Mr Chamberlain, by the transfer of the Niger Coast Protectorate from the Foreign to the Colonial Office, became personally responsible for the administration. He authorised a further Expedition, which this time went out from Benin city; and this, in 1899, broke up the camps of the Chiefs, and pacified a wide area which it had not been safe for the white man to enter. Ologbosheri was captured, and, after trial, in which his personal responsibility for the massacre of the Phillips party was demonstrated, he was executed.

Here we may trace the course of events which led to an area of 500,000 square miles, and a population of about 30,000,000, being added to Mr Chamberlain's charge. France had sought to assert sovereignty on the Niger within the British limits as defined by the Anglo-French Agreements of 1889 and 1890—that is to say, within the Say-Barua line from the Niger to Lake Chad, and within the Hinterland of Lagos.

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The Royal Niger Company had—from no fault of its own—failed to make good its Treaties with native potentates by planting its flag and establishing residents in the Sultanates; and ambitious French officers, working with aggressive energy for the creation of a vast North African Empire for France, flew the tricolour within the British sphere, disregarding prior Treaties with the Niger Company because they had not been followed up by "effective occupation."

The question brought the two nations into sharp controversy. Into the details of the diplomatic dispute which ended in the Convention of June 1898, we need not enter. Mr Chamberlain took a strong and definite line. In various speeches in the House and outside he described how our West Coast possessions had been limited by the lateral French advance from Senegambia, how the Gold Coast and Lagos were threatened by the French intrusion into their Hinterlands, and how necessary it was to make a stand against the aggression of our neighbours in that region. He denied that there was dissension in the Cabinet; but, rightly or wrongly, the public believed that, but for Mr Chamberlain's insistence upon Colonial interests, an arrangement might have been made less advantageous to Great Britain than the Convention which Lord Salisbury was eventually able to conclude. Under this instrument France evacuated Boussa and all places on the lower Niger up to and including Ilo, but retained Nikki, in what we had claimed to be the Lagos Hinterland, and was given access to the right bank of the Niger by bonded warehouses in strips of territory leased to her. A compromise was also made as to the Gold Coast Hinterland, and it was

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arranged with France that for thirty years we should have equality of tariff treatment with her subjects East of Sierra Leone.

The credit of this settlement, which is described only in broad outline, belongs not less to Mr Chamberlain than to Lord Salisbury. Its effect was to complete the *enclaves* which the French advance had made of our West African Possessions, and to define their boundaries subject to expert delimitation. This being done, it became desirable, for the better avoidance of future disputes, to establish direct Imperial administration over the vast area in which the Royal Niger Company had made Treaties, and in which it had, to a certain extent, established jurisdiction—its latest achievement in this direction being the overthrow of the hostile Fulah power in the Emirates of Nupé and Illorin. The Charter of the Royal Niger Company was therefore cancelled in 1899, and on 1st January in the following year the administration was transferred to the Crown, the Company henceforth confining itself to trading operations. The Niger Coast Protectorate lost its official existence, and Nigeria was mapped out into two Protectorates—the Southern, from the Coast up to, roughly, the 7th parallel of N. lat., and the Northern, from that line to the curved Soudanese line from Ilo to Lake Chad. These were placed under the Colonial Office, and Mr Chamberlain found a vast additional area placed under his hands, with one of the most remarkable aggregate of populations that the world contains. The debased Pagans of the Delta live in the lowest depths of savagery, while the Fulah Empire in the North, resting on the broad superstructure of Hausa docility, represents a level of civilisation which

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is one of the surprises of modern African history.

On the one hand, Ju-Ju terrorism in the South had to be suppressed, as we have seen was the case within the Benin region. In the North, the Hausa population had to be freed from such Fulani oppression as was inconsistent with British ideas of equitable government. But this must be done without coming into disastrous conflict with the Fulah power, which had its centre in Sokoto City, and was then a factor of unknown strength. The Slave Trade had to be ended, without touching the question of domestic institution, and thus producing a violent upheaval. Vast regions from the left bank of the Niger to Lake Chad were to be brought within the actual as distinct from the nominal administrative area. The Colonial Office has seldom had imposed upon it a group of questions of greater danger and delicacy than those thus accepted by Mr Chamberlain. He obtained the advice of the best experts — Sir George Taubman-Goldie, the ex-chairman of the Niger Company, and the maker of British Nigeria, who was taken into close consultation, and Colonel (now Sir) F. Lugard, who was sent out to organise the military forces on the Niger during the troubles with France, and was now made Commissioner of the Northern Protectorate. Mr W. Wallace, C.M.G., who had been Sir George Taubman-Goldie's right-hand man in the days of the Chartered Company, and possessed an unrivalled knowledge of the politics and high Fulah personages of the country, was retained as political officer. Sir Ralph Moor, who had successfully administered the Delta strip was made Commissioner for Southern Nigeria. In Lagos, whose affairs may

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be grouped with those of Nigeria, Mr Chamberlain had the help of Sir William Macgregor as Governor; and in the Hinterland of this Colony, between the Dahomey boundary and the Illorin Emirate, there was much work to be done in setting up the machinery of British administration.

The necessity here, as throughout Nigeria, was to open out the trade routes to the interior, and in pursuance of this policy Mr Chamberlain found it necessary in 1897 to authorise an expedition against the Jebus, which was successfully carried through. A more effective method was found in pushing forward a railway from Lagos to Abeokuta, thence to Ibadan, and thus towards the Niger. For this purpose Mr Chamberlain included the sum of £792,500 in the Colonial Loans Act, 1899. On this project —on bridges from Lagos island to the mainland and on a tramway from Lagos to Iddo — the Colony has incurred an indebtedness with the Imperial authorities of £1,053,700, which will not cover the entire cost of the line to Ibadan and of the surveys beyond, but this expenditure is expected to be reproductive not only from commercial causes, but also from the lessened cost and greater security of interior administration.

Leaving the Colony of Lagos with an incidental allusion to an Imperial loan of £43,500 which Mr Chamberlain secured for Harbour Works at Old Calabar, we come to the work done under the Colonial Secretary's direction in the two Nigerian Protectorates. Where civilisation and trade could not be pushed forward by Diplomacy, progress was necessarily conditioned by the amount of force locally available. In the South the West African Frontier force numbered

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1000 men, with artillery, and in the North about 2500, with three batteries of artillery. The figures seem ludicrously small when the extent of the area for which we had become responsible is taken into account. But within little more than two years remarkable results have been accomplished through its agency. Fulani sovereignty is at an end, and the Fulah aristocracy is now an instrument instead of an opponent of British policy.

In Southern Nigeria the untractable Aros, who had held a wide stretch of country between the Opobo and Cross rivers inviolate against the trader and the administrator alike, were subdued in 1901, after a brilliant and difficult campaign. Humanitarian rather than commercial motives were at the bottom of these operations, for Aro-Chuku, the chief town, was a pestiferous stronghold of Ju-Juism comparable with that which had been cleared out at Benin. The natives were thus finally freed from a system of terrorism which it was impossible to tolerate in any region under the British flag. In the Northern Protectorate administrative districts were carved out on the lines of the existing native States, and steady efforts made to extend the administrative system into the backlands from the rivers. Yola, the capital of Adamawa, a Kingdom lying on the left bank of the Benué, between the river and the German Cameroons, was the first important objective.

The only trade of the place was in slaves, in which the Emir did a large traffic on his own account, besides paying a tribute of (it was reported) 10,000 slaves yearly to the head of the Fulah Empire at Sokoto. Though he had made a Treaty years before with Mr Wallace, he would

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have nothing to do with the European interlopers. To the remonstrances of Sir F. Lugard he paid no heed, and in 1901 an expedition was sent up the river to bring him to reason. He fought gallantly outside his town, and again within it, but when the day was lost made good his escape. A Resident and a strong garrison were quartered in Yola, and slave-raiding in that region came to an end, an Emir amenable to British control being placed in nominal authority.

Across the river, in the very heart of Nigeria, similar results were achieved, the slave-dealing Emir of Bautshi being deposed, and a new Emir with a British Resident and garrison installed. Farther to the West lay the great province of Zaria, with a town second only in importance to Kano, and here also a garrison was stationed. The outposts of British authority had been placed on the main lines of communication with the cities of the North and were within 150 miles of Kano, the historic emporium of the Western Soudan.

Meantime, however, the French had not observed the Northern frontier line with scrupulous care. Sir F. Lugard had found it impossible to get on good terms with the Hausa States there, and our rivals acted just as they chose, without regard to British sovereignty. They had, no doubt, serious difficulties to overcome, but that did not justify them in overriding their Treaty arrangements with us. The situation in brief was as follows: For some years Rabeh, a western Soudanese marauder of the type of Samory, had roamed about the neighbourhood of Lake Chad, raiding both in the French sphere and in Bornu. In 1900 he fell in action with the French, and his dying command to his

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son and successor, Fad-el-Allah, was that the protection of the British should be sought, and that henceforth he should act under Sir F. Lugard's administration. Fad-el-Allah, hard pressed by the French, took refuge in Bornu, and made overtures to Sir F. Lugard—overtures cautiously received because of the inadvisability of allying ourselves with the enemy of a friendly Power.

The matter was committed to Mr Wallace, who sent Major M'Clintock to see Fad-el-Allah, and report on the situation. Somewhat incautiously, Major M'Clintock, who was most favourably impressed by Fad-el-Allah, presented that Sovereign with a shot-gun, and this incident was magnified to the French as a liberal present of arms to be used against them. When, therefore, Major M'Clintock returned to headquarters in order to represent that Fad-el-Allah should be recognised as Emir of Bornu, the French forces fell upon Fad-el-Allah at Gujba, 150 miles within the British border, and annihilated his little army. Fad-el-Allah suffered the fate of his father, and, instead of the British finding themselves with a friendly Emir in Bornu, they learned that the French were in victorious occupation of that Province, which to us was almost a *terra incognita*.

An international situation of some gravity had thus been created by the local French officials. Their action was known to be in accord with the desires of the extreme Colonial party in France, who sought such a rectification of the frontier under the Convention as would give France the Sultanate of Bornu and the whole of the Western shores of Lake Chad. This claim was not, however, sanctioned by the Quai d'Orsay, nor was it one that we could admit, particularly after

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the invasion of our Sphere, for which the only possible excuse was that we had not effectively occupied it, and had left it as an asylum for a redoubtable enemy of France.

The precise part Mr Chamberlain played when these facts became known does not appear; the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office have been singularly silent upon the subject, as indeed they always have been upon Nigerian questions; but his views and action may be inferred from the fact that arrangements were pushed forward with France for the dispatch of a Joint Commission for the formal delimitation of the frontier as defined by the Convention of 1898. Colonel G. S. Elliott was the chief British member of the Commission and Captain Mohl—a distinguished name in West Africa—of the French. But in order to secure the safety of the Commission on its way to the scene of its labours and while it was at work, it was necessary that forces should be moved from Zaria, and that the vast region North, West, and East of that town should be rendered British in fact as well as in name.

Mr Chamberlain, engrossed in South African affairs, and being on the point of sailing for Durban, necessarily had to leave the matter, so far as the Colonial Office was concerned, in the hands of Lord Onslow, as acting Secretary of State for the Colonies. Sir F. Lugard failed to take the Colonial Office sufficiently into his confidence. He acted, apparently, on the assumption that previous Despatches of his had convinced his superiors that the Emir of Kano at least would have to be deposed, and he believed that he had a free hand to accomplish this purpose and take whatever other steps he thought to be prudent for the incorporation of

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Sokoto and its feudatory Emirates into the administrative system of Northern Nigeria. He left the Government to learn from the newspapers that the manner in which he intended to secure the safety of the frontier Commissioners was, in the first place, to overturn the hostile Emir of Kano, and that he had massed the Protectorate forces at Zaria for that purpose.

When Lord Onslow asked whether this news was true, Sir F. Lugard had to admit that it was; but he made out so strong a case for offensive action—and there seems no doubt that the Emir had long prepared for aggression on his own account—that Lord Onslow could not but authorise the Expedition, though he strongly deprecated warfare in West Africa if it could, by any measures of Diplomacy, be avoided, and he complained, not without good reason, that Sir F. Lugard had not kept the Government more fully informed. As the Despatch formulating British policy and rebuking the High Commissioner was not Mr Chamberlain's production, we may leave the controversial aspects of the subject at this point. The Expedition under the leadership of Colonel Morland marched upon Kano at the end of January 1903 and on 3rd February, stormed the city, which was held by 5000 foot and 500 horsemen. The Emir, with 1000 cavalry, had withdrawn and made his way to Sokoto, there, no doubt, to make common cause with the new Sultan. Once the walls were carried by the assault, there was little fighting; and Sir F. Lugard's forecast that the Hausas in the city would desert their Fulani masters and welcome the British advent was justified by events.

Thus the great commercial city of the Western

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Soudan—the starting point of the caravan routes across the Continent to the north and east —fell under British control. An Emir favourable to the new administration was installed, a residence and garrison stationed in the city, and authority exercised therefrom over a wide area hitherto closed against us. Colonel Morland then led the column against Sokoto, which was occupied on 15th March after a feeble resistance. The Expedition thus broke down the last important barrier to British ascendancy from the coast to the French desert area. With a force of less than 1000 strong Sir F. Lugard had done much more than it was expected he would be able to do. In spite of occasional disorders, the fear of a Mohammedan movement which would sweep back the whites into the Delta need no longer be entertained. Mr Chamberlain, who never stints his subordinates of praise, spoke of this achievement in terms of fitting generosity, and the messages sent from the Colonial Office doubtless made amends for the public remonstrance which Lord Onslow had administered to the High Commissioner.

If this record does not include minor events in West Africa, such as Sir George Denton's disposal of the chief Fodi-Kabbah in conjunction with the French in the Gambia River region, and the countless administrative questions which have arisen in the various West Coast Colonies, enough has doubtless been said to indicate the magnitude of Mr Chamberlain's work in this part of the Empire, the vigour, the strength of will, and the liberal ideas which have characterised his policy. The survey should not, however, be closed without a reference to his efforts to improve the sanitary and other conditions of life for Europeans.

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The slow progress of these Colonies, as, indeed, of those in every Tropical region, is attributable to a climate which takes a heavy toll of European life, and, where it does not kill, saps the intellectual vigour of those who brave its dangers. The problem of Government is essentially one of health, and to Mr Chamberlain credit is due for having realised that the sanitary conditions must be improved if development is to be hastened in administrative and in commercial affairs. The degree of progress depends upon the number and quality of the white men, whether officials or private adventurers, who can be attracted to the region; and this is a factor of even more importance than the influx of British capital. As a rule, men who can make a good career elsewhere avoid those parts of the Empire where disease and premature death are probable contingencies. There have been, and are, many brilliant exceptions to the rule—exceptions due to ambition for fame or gain, to the fascination that Tropical Africa possesses for a certain type of mind, and to an overmastering intellectual interest in the problems of race and government which West Africa presents for solution to the European.

Apart from purely administrative action, the Colonial Secretary has accorded warm support to the investigation of the causes of malaria. To exterminate the mosquito is a formidable undertaking, and whoever has suffered from the pest in the primeval swamps of the Tropics may well despair of success, and doubt whether, even if the last mosquito were destroyed, malaria would cease; for to turn over the soil may alone bring on an attack. But Major Ross seems to have demonstrated beyond doubt that it is possible to diminish the plague by protective measures against the par-

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ticular variety of insect (*Anopheles*) proved guilty of disseminating malaria ; and his work and that of the Tropical School of Medicine in Liverpool have had no more sympathetic and helpful supporter than the Colonial Secretary. In connection with the Seaman's Hospital at Greenwich also Mr Chamberlain has been instrumental in establishing a school for the study of Tropical Diseases, and in conjunction with Mrs Chamberlain has allied himself with the scheme of Mrs Francis Pigott which has grown into the Colonial Nursing Association.

These measures, however, touch but the fringe of the great problem of health in West Africa. In the future, Mr Chamberlain may have time and energy to deal with it on a comprehensive scale, perhaps as an essential part of a scheme of administrative consolidation, whereby our West African Possessions may be placed under a Governor-General, with a Sanitary Commissioner authorised to exact from each Colony conformity with hygienic principles. Of one thing we may be reasonably certain: we shall not henceforth stand still in West Africa. Though Mr Chamberlain has given a marked impetus to civilisation there, and has accepted territorial and other burdens which are tenfold what the Colonial Office had to bear before he went to Downing Street, he has, nevertheless, a greater task before him than he has thus far been able to accomplish — the task of consolidating Peace within frontiers now definitively settled and of justifying his optimism as to the future of these vast estates. Hereafter it may be necessary to reorganise the Governments of the region on the lines of the Indian system, with a Governor-General who shall impose upon each Possession principles common to all, and shall

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control local administrative expenditure. That, however, may or may not be. What is self-evident, in view of the growing financial obligations of the Empire, is that West Africa must be made to pay its way.

The cardinal point of Mr Chamberlain's policy is that the neglected estates of the Empire are worth developing as a matter of Imperial business, apart from responsibilities of ownership and political sentiment. So far as West Africa is concerned, his work may thus far be described as clearing the ground. Development has been made practicable by the establishment of the *Pax Britannica* throughout our West African domain. Cultivation has begun, and it is now for Mr Chamberlain and his successors to proceed with it until the policy is justified by its fruits. If there is good cause for optimism, there is also some excuse for despondency. Tropical Colonies are ever alternating between uncertain prosperity and almost hopeless depression. It may even be doubted whether the English people, in spite of their belief that no other race is comparable with them in the art of Government in climates and amid peoples where the white man deteriorates and dies, have quite mastered the right way in which Tropical Possessions should be managed so as to become continuously self-supporting. Though the lesson has been learned in India, it certainly has not been applied in other regions of the Empire. At present the outlook is promising; and that anything so novel can truthfully be said about West Africa is perhaps the best comment upon Mr Chamberlain's labours in that region.

It should be added that some interesting and instructive figures are contained in the second

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volume of the Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions, in which the results of the year 1902 are compared with those of 1898, 1899, 1900, and 1901.

GAMBIA.—The value of our Imports in 1898 was £54,229; in 1899 it was £30,597; in 1900 it was £22,372; in 1901 it was £24,624; and in 1902 it was £18,589. The value of our Exports in 1898 was £69,510; in 1899 it was £70,194; in 1900 it was £77,798; in 1901 it was £58,294; and in 1902 it was £93,865.

SIERRA LEONE.—The value of our Imports in 1898 was £124,523; in 1899 it was £150,960; in 1900 it was £138,258; in 1901 it was £127,909; and in 1902 it was £129,426. The value of our Exports in 1898 was £258,818; in 1899 it was £336,705; in 1900 it was £282,568; in 1901 it was £308,719; and in 1902 it was £349,402.

GOLD COAST.—The value of our Imports in 1898 was £666,455; in 1899 it was £706,047; in 1900 it was £621,045; in 1901 it was £373,168; and in 1902 it was £298,387. The value of our Exports in 1898 was £487,456; in 1899 it was £615,738; in 1900 it was £576,456; in 1901 it was £855,438; and in 1902 it was £1,029,236.

LAGOS.—The value of our Imports in 1898 was £1,129,533; in 1899 it was £1,333,646; in 1900 it was £367,631; in 1901 it was £264,257; and in 1902 it was £380,866. The value of our Exports in 1898 was £528,586; in 1899 it was £485,577; in 1900 it was £530,166; in 1901 it was £473,447; in 1902 it was £574,263.

NIGER PROTECTORATE.—The value of our Imports in 1898 was £377,545; in 1899 it was £406,696; in 1900 it was £987,717; in 1901 it was £1,164,622; and in 1902 it was £1,164,303.

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The value of our Exports in 1898 was £628,075; in 1899 it was £607,866; in 1900 it was £681,161; in 1901 it was £651,421; and in 1902 it was £690,720.

The value of the Exports to these Colonies from other countries than the United Kingdom in 1902 was as follows:—Gambia, £6,813; Sierra Leone, £25,242; Gold Coast, £145,000; Lagos, £37,468; Niger Protectorate, £138,784.

To appreciate the significance of these statistics it is, of course, necessary to compare the variations in the Trade totals with the political and military conditions which were, in the course of development, between 1898 and 1902.

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CHAPTER XVII

DOWNING STREET PROBLEMS

A CENTURY hence, the historian of the British Empire, conforming to the perspective of accomplished facts, will, perhaps, devote as much space to the pacific struggle that resulted in the Australian Commonwealth Act of 1900 as to the sanguinary scramblings of the South African War. The idea of Federation was half a century old before Mr Chamberlain helped to give it practical shape. It was embodied by Earl Grey in the abortive Constitution Bill of 1850; but neither then, nor for many years after, was Australian or English opinion ripe for so bold a proposal. Though the project was never dropped, it lay practically dormant till 1889, when Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, convoked a National Convention to discuss a scheme of Federal Government. In the following year an Inter-colonial Conference was held at Melbourne, which approved the principle: in 1891 a similar body, meeting at Sydney, framed a draft Constitution. But not till 1894 was any definite progress achieved. In that year a Conference of Australian Premiers, summoned by Mr Reid of New South Wales, and held at Hobart, adopted an "Enabling Bill" which gave New Zealand the option of joining the movement. Even-

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tually, a Bill was framed which was submitted to the popular vote in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia, and in each of these States obtained a majority—though it was only a narrow one in the very Colony whose Statesmen had been most active in promoting the cause. In 1899 an amended Bill was put to a similar test. Though opinion was still divided in New South Wales, the majority had largely increased, but in Queensland the two Parties were nearly equal, while in Victoria, Queensland, and Tasmania the adverse minority was inconsiderable.

The question had now come within the range of practical politics, nor is it necessary to discuss the Inter-colonial rivalries and the fiscal difficulties which had previously delayed its progress. It was in obedience to a clear mandate from the Australian States (New Zealand still stood out, but Western Australia came in) that Mr Chamberlain introduced his Commonwealth Bill on 14th May 1900. "We have got (he said) to a point in our relations with our Self-Governing Colonies when, I think, we recognise once for all that our relations with them depend entirely upon their free-will and absolute consent. The links between us at the present time are very slender; almost a touch might snap them; but slender and slight as they are—although we hope they will become stronger—still, if they are felt irksome by any one of our great Colonies, we shall not attempt to force them to wear them."

Mr Chamberlain's faith in personal intercourse as the best means of reconciling conflicts of opinion was once more exemplified. When the text of the Bill, as endorsed by the Referendum in

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Australia, was sent to England, with the Addresses praying the Crown to enact a measure of Federation, Mr Chamberlain had requested that Delegates should be authorised to visit this country and confer with himself and the Law Officers of the Crown. In accordance with this suggestion the representatives appointed by the Colonies—Mr (now Sir) E. Barton by New South Wales, Mr Kingston by South Australia, Mr Deakin by Victoria, Dr Dickson by Queensland, and Sir Philip Fysh by Tasmania — threshed out all preliminary matters in Downing Street; and when the Bill came before the House of Commons there was but one important point remaining unsettled. This was Clause 74, which provided that "no appeal shall be permitted to the Queen in Council on any matter involving the interpretation of the Constitution or of a Constitution of a State unless the public interest of some part of Her Majesty's Dominions other than the Commonwealth or a State are involved." Save as thus provided, the prerogative to hear appeals as of grace was to be unimpaired, but the Parliament of the Commonwealth might make laws limiting the matters in which special leave could be asked.

The point is concisely stated by Professor Harrison Moore in *The Commonwealth of Australia* (John Murray):—

"The objections to these provisions were obvious. The questions withdrawn from the Queen in Council were precisely those on which, in the words of the Law Officers, 'the Queen in Council has been able to render most valuable service to the administration of law in the Colonies, and questions of this kind, which may sometimes involve a good deal of local feeling,

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are the last that should be withdrawn from a Tribunal of Appeal, with regard to which there could not be even a suspicion of prepossession. The provisions of the section safeguarding the Appeal where the 'public interests' of other parts of Her Majesty's dominions were concerned, were vague and uncertain; and the Commonwealth was receiving extended powers of legislation which might well affect places and interests outside Australia. Finally, the Law Officers urged that 'the retention of the prerogative to allow an Appeal to Her Majesty in Council would accomplish the great desire of Her Majesty's subjects both in England and in Australia, that the bonds which now unite them may be strengthened rather than severed, and by ensuring uniform interpretation of the law throughout the Empire, facilitate that unity of action for the common interests which will lead to a real federation of the Empire.' The Delegates held that the Clause was part of the Federal Agreement which had twice received the approval of the people of the Colonies; that an Amendment would make the Constitution no longer the very instrument which the people had accepted, and cited the declaration of Mr Reid that 'there will be no safety or security for Australian Union until it is known that the Bill that Australia has drafted for the Imperial Parliament to pass word for word is passed by that august Tribunal word for word.' Finally they urged that while the real links of Empire were the consciousness of kinship and a common sense of duty, the pride of race and history, the cause of Imperial Unity would not be aided by putting in apparent conflict the Federation of Australia and Imperial Federation."

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This passage brings into clear relief the rock upon which it was feared that the Bill might be wrecked. Mr Chamberlain was unable to accept the view of the case put forward by Mr Reid, or to agree that, in assenting to the Bill on the Referendum, the voters of Australia wished to prevent the Imperial Legislature from amending the Clauses. One of the links of the chain which held the Colonies to the Mother Country was the right of appeal to the Queen in Council, and in the larger interests of Australia and the Empire he felt bound to propose a modification of Clause 74. As it stood it would lead to conflict between the Privy Council and the High Court of Australia; nothing could be worse than to have concurrent Courts giving contradictory decisions within the Empire. There was danger also that decisions of a Colonial Court might bring about complications with Foreign Powers, and on such a matter the Imperial Court of Appeal ought to have something to say.

Mr Chamberlain's way out of the difficulty, pending the amalgamation of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council with the appellate jurisdiction of the House of Lords, was to appoint representatives from Australia, Canada, India, and South Africa, on the Privy Council for a term of seven years, which might be renewable. These four Judges would act also as Lords of Appeal, and would enjoy life peerages. A Bill to this effect would be introduced into the Upper House. In spite of the objection that this Amendment to Clause 74 would be considered an open rebuff to the Australian people, Mr Chamberlain, on moving the Second Reading of the Bill on 21st May, was able to

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announce, amid the loud cheers of the House, that an absolute settlement had been reached with the Delegates. He had not altered his views, but, "in accordance with the principles to which we are committed, we cannot interfere where exclusively Australian interests are concerned." It had been agreed with the Delegates that, in all cases in which other than Australian questions were concerned, the right of appeal to the Crown should be fully maintained, while purely Australian questions, such as differences between two States or a State and the Federal Parliament arising out of the interpretation of the Measure, would be decided by the Australian High Court unless both parties agreed to refer the point in dispute to the Privy Council.

The terms of this Amendment turned Clause 74 inside out. As it had stood, there was to be no appeal to the Privy Council, except in cases where the public interests of some portion of the Dominions of the Crown outside Australia were concerned, while the new Clause allowed appeal in every case except where Australian interests alone were affected; and there was a provision that any legislation by the Commonwealth restricting the right to appeal should be subject to ratification by the Crown. The Colonial Laws Validity Act was still to apply to the enactments of the Federated Colonies. It is true that the previous right of appeal to the Crown has been in some degree impaired, and that, on that account, the Act has been unfavourably criticised by high Constitutional authorities; but the dangers they foretold have not yet been experienced. It may be admitted that the existing compromise cannot be permanently maintained. Already its

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defects have been revealed (and magnified, of course, by judicial pedantry), but it has served its immediate political purpose. Had it not been for the concession with which Mr Chamberlain purchased the assent of the Delegates they would certainly have insisted on the original Clause, and the Bill would have been lost — perhaps shelved for an indefinite period. As modified, it was found to be in harmony with the prevailing body of opinion at home and in the Colonies, and it passed its Third Reading in the House of Commons on 25th June. In the House of Lords Lord Carrington, who had been Governor of New South Wales, attacked Mr Chamberlain's Amendment as a surrender to uninstructed opinion, but the Bill passed through its stages and received the Royal Assent without further difficulty.

In the words of the Colonial Secretary—who had combined a reasonable amount of firmness with a readiness to compromise on what was non-essential — the Commonwealth Act marked "a great and important step in the organisation of the British Empire." The Commonwealth, with the Earl of Hopetoun as the first Governor-General, was inaugurated by the Duke of York, now Prince of Wales, on the first day of the new century. So far, it must be confessed, the most visible result of the Act has been to develop friction. That, however, is the way of all Democracy—to clamour for Reform, and, when it has been granted, to pick holes in the gift. But that is also the manner in which defective Constitutions are gradually improved. We may call it, as we please, Popular Ingratitude, or, more amiably, Progressive Desire. But the grumblings which have been heard since the

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Act came into force show how wise Mr Chamberlain was to take occasion by the forelock, and get the Bill passed at once. If a few months later public opinion had veered in New South Wales the whole scheme would have been killed; even if Queensland had turned restive the chances of the Measure might have been imperilled. Having been passed, it is not likely to be reversed. But it is by no means so certain that it would be carried this year or next year if it were brought up in Australia as a new proposal. The controversy* which has already arisen between the Federal Government and the South Australian Ministry—on little more than a point of public etiquette—illustrates the difficulty of Constitution-making. The only practicable method is to lay down the general lines, and leave the details to be supplied afterwards by accumulating experience and—in this instance—by the self-adapting genius of the British race, which has always and everywhere been tolerant of anomalies that are not seriously inconvenient.

A brief reference must be made to Mr Chamberlain's efforts to improve the political and social conditions of Newfoundland. Here he soon found himself in conflict with the local politicians. The Island is a Self-Governing Colony,

* See "Correspondence respecting Constitutional Relations of the Australian Commonwealth and States in regard to External Affairs," published by the Colonial Office, May 1903. Another difficulty has since arisen in connection with the employment of Lascars on vessels carrying the Australian mails. The Federal Government were too weak to resist the dictation of the Labour Party, and attempted to influence the arrangements made by the Imperial Government. Mr Chamberlain made very short work of this inordinate pretension.

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and, acting on its undoubted rights, the Assembly, in the hope of averting public bankruptcy, had made a contract with Mr Reid, of Montreal, by which he took over the railway lines and held the resources of Newfoundland in pawn, obtaining vast land concessions upon easy terms. The Governor, Sir H. H. Murray, declined to sign the contract, and asked Mr Chamberlain what he should do. Mr Chamberlain objected to the arrangement, and disclaimed any responsibility for it. He wrote a Despatch which exposed the improvidence of the bargain, but he was not prepared to disallow it. The Measure was not so "radically vicious as to reflect discredit on the Empire;" if the Colony insisted upon having it, it must be given its own way and put up with the consequences. Never had a Self-Governing Colony been so soundly rated, and there was a lively quarrel in the Island, in which the advocates of the contract used heated language about the Colonial Secretary.

When they afterwards asked him to send a Royal Commission to investigate the causes of the distress in the Island, which they attributed to the strained interpretation that the French laid on their Treaty rights—and when they showed a desire for relief from the Imperial Exchequer—Mr Chamberlain pointed out that they had alienated the assets of the Colony, and their request for a Royal Commission was nothing but an appeal for financial aid.

"Such an application cannot for a moment be entertained, and I request that you [Sir H. H. Murray] will at once inform your Ministers that it is impossible for the Imperial Government to take any responsibility, or accord any financial assistance, in the case of a Self-Governing Colony

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which has had full control of its finance, and is solely responsible for its mismanagement."

This was in 1897. The Colonists, however, rushed the contract through, and still pressed for the Commission. Having recovered from his annoyance at the Ministry's disregard of business principles, and having looked more deeply into the condition of the Island, he sent out Sir John Bramston and Sir James Erskine in 1898 as Royal Commissioners. Their Report has not been published; but, speaking at Wolverhampton shortly after their return, Mr Chamberlain denounced the French policy in regard to the Treaty rights as "mischievous and deplorable," and as "contrived to combine the maximum of annoyance and injury with the least possible advantages to its authors." These remarks, it should be explained, were made at the time when France was indulging in that policy of "pin-pricks" which she has since abandoned.

"If France intends to continue to ignore the solemn obligations of an Agreement which was come to only eight years ago, I think, after all, she is the wrong party to put forward the sanctity of the obsolete provisions of an antiquated Treaty which is now something like two hundred years old. However, I put that aside, because, for the present, at any rate, nobody occupying a position of responsibility ever expressed an intention, or even a wish, to evade or ignore in the slightest degree any provision of any Treaty to which we have set our hand. But we do claim, we do desire, that the rights which are conferred upon France by this Treaty should be strictly interpreted by her, and that they should not be extended and abused to the injury of our own pocket. Then, when

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these rights are reviewed with due and proper precautions, if they are found to have any value whatever to France—about which I think there is considerable doubt—or if the French think they have any value—then we should be perfectly willing either to observe them as they are, and to the letter, or else, if France is willing, to remove a constant source of irritation and arrange for their extinction on fair and reasonable terms of compensation."

Since these words were spoken the grievance has become less acute, chiefly because of the decline of French fishing interests from economic causes. The Reid Contract has also been radically modified, and the Island is now fairly prosperous.

In the international aspect of certain Canadian questions, Mr Chamberlain's influence has been felt by his Colleagues in the Cabinet, and by the Dominion Ministry rather than seen by the public. He took a leading part in the personal and private interchange of views which ended the Venezuela-Guiana crisis of 1895, and has always kept in close touch with American Diplomatists here. They have good reason to know that, eager as he is to promote something more than good feeling between the United States and ourselves, he is as keen a man at a bargain as they are themselves, and as stout a champion of Canadian rights as they would be if they stood in his place. The part he has played in relation to Anglo-American controversies has, of course, been informal and unofficial. It is known, however, that he cordially sympathised with Lord Salisbury's efforts, after the Venezuelan trouble had been tided over, to arrange a Treaty of General Arbitration with the United States,

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and that he shared to the full the disappointment of the ex-Prime Minister and Lord Pauncefote when the Washington Senate wrecked the scheme.

In spite of his somewhat effusive friendliness towards the United States, he has not stood upon ceremony in dealing with what he considered exorbitant pretensions. When, for example, the late Mr Sherman, who was Foreign Secretary in the earlier part of the M'Kinley Administration, took advantage of a recrudescence of anti-British feeling in the States, to make a vigorous attack upon the Canadian sealing industry in the Behring Sea, Mr Chamberlain handled the American arguments in a Despatch of remarkable energy and directness. The point of Mr Sherman's complaint, urged in very unmannerly language, was that the British Government were evading the regulations of the Paris Arbitration Court as to pelagic sealing. Resenting the implied charge of bad faith, Lord Salisbury declined to reopen the question, whereupon Mr Sherman arranged a Conference with Russia and Japan, which the British Government refused to join. His argument was that the herds were being destroyed by the Canadian sealers, but Mr Chamberlain had little difficulty in showing that Mr Sherman's real object was, not to prevent the extinction of the seal by Canadian fishers, but to destroy the Canadian industry in the interests of an American Company which aimed at getting a monopoly on the Pribyloff breeding grounds. The vigour of the communication addressed by the Colonial Secretary to the Foreign Office (1897) was sufficiently excused by the tone of the document to which it was a reply. Nor was it without a wholesome

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effect at Washington. Mr Sherman, who was suffering from an illness that produced an unfortunate condition of irritability, was afterwards found to be somewhat deficient in the qualities that a Foreign Secretary should possess, and his retirement was arranged.

The relations between the two countries have been gradually improving — the exultation with which Continental nations watched the absurd quarrel about Venezuela had opened the eyes of Washington as well as of London. When certain European States proposed to intervene on behalf of Spain, and require the Americans to desist from warlike preparations, not only did the British Government refuse to join in this action, but they also intimated that, if coercion were attempted, our Navy would be used in defence of the United States. Though gratitude has nowhere been a characteristic of Democracy, American Statesmen were so far mindful of the service rendered to them that, in May 1898, it became possible to arrange for the appointment of the Joint High Commission of which the late Lord Herschell was Chairman.

It was hoped that this body might be able to dispose of the various Canadian questions referred to it. Nothing, however, was accomplished. A *modus vivendi* was afterwards drawn up with regard to the Alaskan boundary, and that subject has recently (February 1903) been committed to a mixed Commission of Jurists. Whether that tribunal will relieve the Colonial Office of an awkward, if not urgent question, remains to be seen.

The political affairs of Malta have occupied an amount of the Colonial Secretary's time absurdly out of proportion to their intrinsic im-

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portance. But the story is worth telling at some length, because it is amusing, and also because it illustrates the number and complexity of the duties which have to be performed by a Colonial Secretary who has his heart in his work. The Island is administered by a Legislative Council consisting of six Official and thirteen Elected Members — subject to the Governor's Veto. The Italian or semi-Italian element in a very mixed population have developed a marked aptitude for the methods of advanced Democracy, and have long clamoured for complete Self-Government—an indulgence which it is quite impossible to concede to a Colony which is only retained as a Military Fortress. In 1898 the Council refused to sanction the use of the English language in the Courts of Law. In order to carry out this necessary Measure, it was decided in 1899 to issue an Order in Council, and to proclaim that after 1914 English would be substituted for Italian in all legal proceedings. This would inflict no practical grievance, since almost universally the Italian-speaking inhabitants were well acquainted with English. But it was made the lever for quite a serious little agitation.

Dr F. Mizzi and Mr S. Cachia Zammit were sent over to London to urge the "claims and grievances of the Maltese." The account of their interview with Mr Chamberlain, given in a Blue-book published in July 1901, is very quaint reading. The Delegates complained that it was difficult to turn their statement from Italian into English. "It is so different to our mode of expression because we are expansive and coloured!" Nevertheless, Mr Chamberlain assured them that they had put their

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views quite clearly. As to the proposed substitution of English for Italian in 1914, he told them that the decision would only be carried into effect if it should turn out, as he believed it would, that by that time English had become the language of the great majority of the people. The demand that the Council should have complete authority in legislation, taxation, and expenditure was, he remarked, "a good deal to ask for in a Fortress!" With reference to the action of the Council in refusing to undertake certain necessary drainage works—which had, therefore, to be done under an Order in Council—he hoped that under no circumstances would he be again compelled to send Orders in Council. "I do not want to do it," he said.

Mr Cachia Zammit.—You said it yourself "with regret"; I have read it: that is so.

Dr Mizzi.—But, sir, why do not the officials put before your eyes the true state of these things? Why did they not tell you that our question was not of raising the taxes, but was only to get a few weeks to have the honest consent of the electors? They should have done it. You mentioned about the electorate. Sir, I wish to be clear about that. I do not propose that those who have already a vote should be deprived of the vote, but for the future no one should have the vote if he is illiterate, with the intention of compelling fathers indirectly, if not obligingly, to send their children to school. I think that if to the illiterate electors you say, "You have a vote by chance, but your children will not have it if they are illiterate," it will oblige them indirectly to send their children to school. It is in that sense I have spoken, and I think it is not a bad thing. You mentioned some other things, but not to take

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up too much time, perhaps, you would allow me to make a response in writing.

Mr Chamberlain.—Yes.

Dr Mizzi.—I will not trouble you too much now, but there are so many details, sir, that change altogether the circumstances. I must add to you that this distinct question of the drainage has been spoken of for ten years, and in these ten years there was money available, and the Governor did not do the drainage works. He is compelled now only for a political purpose, and they succeeded to a certain degree because we have an Order in Council for what we would have done ourselves. But never mind—only they did not succeed in this—they thought they would have compromised us with our constituents; they acted as if the Maltese were sheep, but the Maltese are most intelligent.

Mr Chamberlain.—The Maltese are not sheep at all.

Mr Cachia Zammit.—I have only to add this, that our exchequer has been overloaded with money for the last twenty years, and the Government had ample to come with a drainage scheme ten years ago. Now, as you said the other day, it is much easier to control expenditure than to raise public money. I have read it in one of your Despatches. So it was with us. We did find some difficulty in raising money, because we had a programme which bound us to the electors, and we asked for time, and that time would have been given by any officials but those officials we have.

Dr Mizzi.—After ten years of this Government—

Mr Cachia Zammit.—Besides that, there is the money which has been wasted on the electric light, and about the railway. Unfortunately the

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railway does not improve, and the Government of a Colony ought not to play the part of a merchant. What business had the Government to instal the electric light? There were so many merchants who came forward, and I can assure you it is a total failure. Money has been wasted, and it will go wasted. Besides, Malta is overstocked with clerks and writers of all descriptions.

Mr Chamberlain.—I think I must not go more into detail.

Dr Mizzi.—You will allow us to make it in writing?

Mr Chamberlain.—Yes, anything further you have to say, and if you do that I will keep back any reply until I receive those further statements from you.

Dr Mizzi.—But some of them will not come until I go back to Malta.

Mr Chamberlain.—It is just as you please, but I wish to have all the facts before me.

Dr Mizzi.—I am satisfied with that, because so you will see the better.

Mr Cachia Zammit.—Thank you very much for your kindness and courtesy.

Dr Mizzi.—We hope that our explanations will show that we are not so wrong as we are thought to be.

Mr Chamberlain.—What I should like to say would be, let all bygones be bygones, and do let us work together in the future. That is what I should like to say.

The further statements were duly sent to the Colonial Secretary on 1st August, and contained an appropriately "expansive and coloured" appeal:—

"Addressing an Englishman, and especially an Englishman in your high position, who possesses

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such brilliant personal qualities, our language is plain. England has been the Apostle of freedom and progress to the whole world, and, yet, we, who are under the British Flag, only know of all these grand things as a matter of theory and doctrine. Our condition in reference to freedom and progress is equal to the condition of an Esquimaux who hears the description of a magnificent summer day in a Southern country. The description exhilarates him, but he does not feel the beneficial action of the sun he hears of, and his blood does not get warm in his veins.

"The local officials, who urge the Government to compel us to change our language of education, are those same men who suggest and insinuate that the Maltese should be governed by Orders in Council, and be taxed also by similar Orders, in spite of their opposition!

"Why?

"Sir, may we point out that the drainage question and the taxes have in reality been used by the local officials as a political move to compromise the elected members with their constituents, for, if they opposed the taxes they would have been held as responsible for the odious measures that the Imperial Government might enforce, and if they passed them, they would have been accused of betraying their promise. But the electors have seen through this game of the officials, who cannot get the support of the people by legitimate and Constitutional means."

Referring to the police measures adopted ten years before in dealing with a disorderly meeting, they described it as "an unglorious plot," and said that the "forbearance displayed by the

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Maltese" was "providential!" Had they retaliated, the consequences would have been disastrous and deplorable!

A report of their interview with Mr Chamberlain was sent by the Delegates to the Maltese Press:—

"The reception was a courteous one; Mr Chamberlain made a sign to us to take our seats, and he took his. His look was rather a stern one, but he was polite in his deportment.

"He made a sign to us to submit our grievances, and we availed ourselves of his permission to speak, in the first place, with reference to the Constitution, and in the second place, on the Language Question.

"With reference to our remarks on the subject of the Constitution, Mr Chamberlain deplored the conduct of the elected members of the Council of Government, and used some strong language. He afterwards said that he did not intend to decide then the questions laid before him, but he wished to say what in that moment it seemed to him he could say with reference to the Constitution and to the Language Question; and, after stating his views, he said that that was not a definite reply, but that he would give us a reply later on through the Governor.

"We asked him to permit us to give some explanations in regard to the points to which he had referred, and he allowed us to do so. We submitted to him several remarks; seeing, however, that we were detaining him too much, and as we had still much to say, we concluded more or less in these terms:—'Sir, we know very well how precious your time is, and we would not abuse of your kindness. We have, however, many things to say on the different

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questions which have been touched upon, and, in order not to detain you any longer, we would request to be allowed to submit our reasons in writing. We have already two Reports to present to you, and, with your permission, we shall present them to-morrow. But we have other matters to refer to, and later on we shall send in another Report.'

"He kindly complied with our request, and added :—'I shall make it a point not to reply to your first Reports before receiving the other Report, because I do not wish to come to a decision before I have before me all the required information.'

"We thanked him and expressed to him our satisfaction. At the same time we told him that we would have prepared the other Report after our return to Malta, and so we would have delayed its transmission a little. He replied that that did not matter.

"And we took our leave.

"Having mentioned the stern mien of the Secretary of State, we feel bound to add that this sternness did not continue to the end of the conversation."

They pointed out to their friends that the Maltese cause was persistently misrepresented in the English Press :—

"It has been said, amongst other things, that the higher classes of the Maltese do not want the English language because they fear lest the English should show the people that they are paying the tax on wheat to the benefit of the well-to-do, who pay no taxes. It has been said that the Priests and the Church, who are very rich, are against the English language for the same reason, because they wish to keep the

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people in ignorance. It has been said that the Magistrates are ferocious in passing sentence on Englishmen and very mild in passing sentence on Maltese. Similar statements, and others, still worse, are often published and pass uncontradicted, as if they were truth itself; in this way public opinion has been formed, and to alter that opinion immense efforts are to be made.

"Meanwhile, it is absolutely necessary to keep an eye on the English Press, and answer all its attacks for another reason; that is, when it becomes necessary to take action, as in the case of the present mission, immense difficulties have to be encountered in trying to answer at one time the attacks of many years, for the papers will not accept long articles, and when such articles are accepted, nobody will read them. We must write briefly, but we must write every time we are calumniated; it is in this way that we shall smash the teeth of this viper, so often used by our enemies."

In a long Despatch of 19th June 1900, Mr Chamberlain explained to Governor Sir F. W. Grenfell his views on the whole position. It will be sufficient to quote the final paragraphs dealing with the Language Question. Having pointed out that the Order in Council of March 1899, which permitted the use of English in the Courts of Law, had been rendered necessary by a gross miscarriage of justice, and was itself in accordance with the principles of common sense, he showed that the use of Italian as the official language rested merely on a declaration made in the reign of William IV., that it was not learned with any special ease by the great body of the Maltese (who speak an Arabic *patois*), and that a steadily increasing number of the inhabitants of

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the Island wished, as was proved by the Education Returns, that their children should be taught English :—

" Her Majesty's Government accordingly arrived at the conclusion that the time was not far distant when the English language should be definitely adopted as the language of the Courts in Malta, and the period of fifteen years was fixed in order that those whose interests might be affected (such as the members of the legal profession), might know that the change was impending and might have ample time to prepare themselves for it.

" I may also observe that the diminishing popularity of the Italian language in Malta is due not to any arbitrary measure of suppression on the part of the Government, but to the operation of natural causes, namely, the fact that the Maltese find it to their commercial and material advantage to possess a knowledge of the English language, and consequently desire to acquire that knowledge before taking up the study of Italian. Her Majesty's Government have, in fact, fallen in with the desire of the population of Malta ; but, by fixing the date of the official substitution of the English for the Italian language at a distant date, have taken reasonable precaution to prevent the change which they regard as inevitable from causing inconvenience.

" Dr Mizzi and Mr Zammit further make a special complaint of the changes which have been recently effected in the Elementary Schools of Malta. As in regard to the Courts, so in this case, they allege that the English language is being imposed upon the Maltese, and that the interests of the latter suffer by the substitution of that language for Italian.

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"Prior to the changes in question the children in the schools were taught at the same time the two foreign languages, English and Italian, and also the native Maltese language; but as a rule, they were not kept at school long enough to learn even the elements of either the English or the Italian sufficiently for any practical purpose. The new regulations provide that children are to be taught Maltese only, and other subjects through the medium of Maltese, for the first two years; and that, at the end of that period, parents are to choose between English and Italian as the only other language to be taught in the higher classes of the Elementary Schools. The language chosen is also taught through the medium of the Maltese language. The educational returns for 1898 show that parents in Malta and Gozo, having the choice before them whether their children should be instructed in English or in Italian, have to the extent of from 79 to 100 per cent. of their number elected for their instruction in the English language.

"Thus the allegation that the English language is being forcibly imposed upon the people of Malta completely fails. An overwhelming number of the parents or guardians select the English language for their children, in preference to Italian, at the end of the first two years; and this choice is made of their own free will, and, doubtless, because they find it to the advantage of the children. The educational reform just indicated is based on principles of liberty. It appears to be strongly approved of by the parents or guardians of the children, to be acceptable to the pupils themselves, and to be calculated to promote the welfare of the population. In these circumstances Her Majesty's Government see no ground

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for modifying in any way the present arrangements.

The last paragraphs of the Despatch contained a few observations on the general situation :—

"Malta is a large fortress where naval and military interests and the rights of the non-Maltese inhabitants require careful adjustment with local requirements, and it might well have been argued in 1887, when a new Constitution was given, that it was undesirable to grant to the population more than the control of Municipal affairs. However, a Constitution was granted to the Island in that year, which, while giving a large measure of political freedom to the Maltese, was not intended to diminish the ultimate responsibility of the Governor. This Constitution was given in deference to the assurance that it would be thoroughly satisfactory to the Maltese, and that proper advantage would be taken of it, whereas, as a matter of fact, no real advantage has been taken of it at all. The Maltese, generally, take no interest in it. They do not come forward in the elections, and the gentlemen, who are elected by a very small number, when they become Members of the Legislative body, instead of assisting business by legitimate criticism, too often delay business and prevent useful Legislation from being carried out.

"Her Majesty's Government, therefore, cannot consent to extend a Constitution which, in view of the special circumstances of the Island, appears to them to be sufficiently liberal. Elected Members who possess administrative ability can, by accepting seats in the Executive Council, exercise great influence in local affairs, and can, by their advice and criticism, render valuable assistance to the Government, though the Government alone

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is responsible for the action which is ultimately taken. I trust that Elected Members of this type will be found ready to take their seats in the Executive Council, and that they and their colleagues will cordially co-operate with the Governor and Official Members in promoting the welfare of the Maltese which is earnestly desired by Her Majesty's Government."

The obstructive action of the Elected Members having continued, on 8th August the Governor dissolved the Council. On the 18th they addressed a protest to the Colonial Secretary —expressing their disappointment that "the Maltese population should not indulge in any future hope of change":—

"We most respectfully entreat you to consider that Malta belongs to the Maltese, and if Great Britain has now the benefit of so important a fortress and naval station, it is because the Maltese have placed themselves under her protection, giving her the use of them; so it cannot but seem to us very strange that just because Malta is very precious to England the Maltese must be deprived of that political freedom which they most eagerly and earnestly have endeavoured to secure. The more precious is our country to the British Empire, the greater should be England's gratitude, and still greater its bounden duty to adhere strictly to those obligations which were explicitly and implicitly assumed towards the people of Malta. We therefore appeal to you once more, soliciting the grant of a Constitution more consonant with the principles of self-government; no such concession, limited to our local and domestic affairs, can in any manner encroach on the legitimate interests of the fortress and the naval station."

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The proposed substitution of the English for the Italian language was "an act of tyranny unbecoming to the Government that perpetrated it":—

"You state that the Commission of King William IV. about the language of the Maltese laws cannot be regarded as an irrevocable pledge that the Italian language was to remain the official language of Malta; why, sir, that Commission was most positively a pledge, and as irrevocable as a pledge of an English King should be. On that occasion an attempt was made by the Government to change the official language of Malta. The Maltese, you must be aware, protested strongly and solemnly, and the Commission of Her Majesty's predecessor came as an assurance that the rights of the Maltese would be ever respected.

"Now we beg you to observe that no pledges were or are necessary. If England had conquered Malta, it would have been inhuman to carry the rights of conquest so far as to change the official language of the Maltese. But Malta was not conquered by Great Britain; the Maltese placed themselves under the British protection of their own free will, with the assurance that their rights would be maintained and upheld, such as that of the language, which, after religion, is paramount. It is, therefore, only an abuse of power and a grave injustice not to let them perfectly at liberty on this question.

"As to our assertion that the Maltese dialect is full of Italian words, and learning Italian from the Maltese is, for this reason, rendered easier, your officials dared to inform you that such assertion is not correct. At section four of our letter of the 28th October 1899, we informed you that Com-

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missioner Keenan suggested that the Maltese dialect should be purified of all Italian words, with which it abounds, and that, in order to make the study of the Italian difficult. Such whimsical ordeal was to be performed by substituting Arabic words for Italo-Maltese ones. Now, this proposal, besides being pernicious in itself, thoroughly proves the correctness of our assertion.

"The bad faith of the Government to compel children in the Primary Schools to lose their time in studying Maltese, is shown by a comparison of this policy with that of the British Government towards Ireland and Wales. Great efforts are being made to persuade the Irish and the Welsh not to lose time in learning their languages, which are 'a wall of words against civilisation.' Now the Irish and the Welsh are counted by millions, and the Maltese only number 180,000, so that the Maltese dialect is much more 'a wall of words' against the civilisation of the Maltese people than the Irish language in Ireland, and the Welsh language in Wales."

The political character of the Italian agitators may be judged from the concluding words of Dr Mizzi's address to the electors, issued 30th October 1900:—

"Up to about eighteen months ago the Government had not in the matter of taxation forced their authority on the population; now, it is clear, they intend to do so, and if the representatives of the people will yield, the Government will strangle the population through the Maltese themselves; but it is foolish of those who believe that by giving them a little they will have satisfied their hunger and secured something for the people. No! after the repast they will be more hungry than before.

"Now my colleagues and myself do not want to

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be the executioners of our brothers, and we declare, clearly and without circumlocutions, that we want no taxes. We present ourselves as candidates to-day with this programme; if the population wants to allow themselves to be imposed upon, let them choose others instead of us. We know very well what use the Government make of the people's money, and until the country is governed by the representatives of the taxpayers, by persons responsible to the people, by persons worthy of the people's confidence, we cannot promise to sanction any taxes, not even in the slightest amount. Let the Government change their nefarious policy towards the Maltese, to whom it is expressly said that the Government must have a greater regard to the interests of the few resident Englishmen than to those of the natives, as we learn from the last barefaced Despatch of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and it will then be seen that without the necessity of further taxes the country can resume its florid condition."

Again, on 12th March 1901, the same politician issued an Appeal to the Maltese: "The language question (he wrote) is not only a question of sentiment and of freedom, it is also a question of bread. The English Government wants to provide an opening for Englishmen here. England has many Colonies, and she also has a vast Indian Empire; but her Empire and her Colonies are too distant, and their climate is very unfavourable, whilst to Englishmen the climate of Malta is delicious.

"As soon as the English language shall be installed as the official language you will see the highest posts filled by Englishmen. But what do I say, the 'highest posts?' All the posts,

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big and small, shall be occupied by Englishmen; and if you have eyes to see you must perceive that even in our Police there are already several English faces, and there would have been many more if Englishmen did not get drunk so often. The Government is already preparing the posts for Englishmen by augmenting salaries. The salary of the Chief Secretary has been increased by £300, that of the Judges by £100 each, and several heads of Departments have had various offices merged into one.

"Besides, the Government endeavours to obtain increases of salary by the vote of the Elected Members. All this wealth squeezed out of Maltese blood, in the form of present and future taxes, is not meant for you, poor Maltese. '*Sic vos non vobis nidificatis, aves.*' All this wealth, squeezed out of your blood, is intended to nourish your masters, if you allow your masters to be your masters beyond what is right. Your sons are to be relegated to the lowest offices in the service of these masters; they will only get the bread of abasement, and they will curse you in your graves if you do not, no matter at what sacrifice, prevent the Government from substituting the English for the Italian language.

"So far, it has been the Italian language that has prevented Englishmen from eating up the morsel of black bread which is all that is left to us.

"Because, you must well understand that when the English language shall become the official language for the whole Island, Englishmen will always speak their own tongue better than any Maltese, and they shall enjoy all the sympathy of the Government in preference to any Maltese. Let this barrier be knocked down, and you will

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see that the Maltese, already sufficiently despised in their own house, will only get the crumbs that will fall from English tables.

"And do not believe that England is too rich to require anything from Malta; owing to the wretched distribution of wealth in that country, her middle classes are as poor as her lowest classes. About twelve years ago we copied from the English papers the news that for a post of £60 a year there were 160,000 applicants!! The English population has since augmented, and so have its needs."

If the Maltese persevered, the orator continued, the British Government in the end must give way. "Chamberlain and his principal satellite, Strickland, are compromised because their *amour propre* compels them to support their own decisions as far as they can, but Chamberlain will not be for all eternity Secretary of State for the Colonies, nor Strickland Chief Secretary to Government *per omnia secula seculorum*." But the concluding words were the best! "Our cause is a just one: God is with us. We have, therefore, excellent reasons to hope for a victory."

At a meeting of Italians held on Easter Sunday (1901), one speaker suggested imitation of the Boers—a handful of men who were holding out against England—though he hastened to add "we cannot take up arms as the Boers did." They must rely on logic! Other arts of the weak were called into requisition, and on 27th May the Governor found it necessary to meet organised mendacity with the following Proclamation:—

"Whereas it has come to the knowledge of His Excellency the Governor that panic has been caused and children have been suddenly withdrawn

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from school by their parents because rumours have been maliciously put in circulation to the effect that the Government is promoting the teaching of English in the Government Elementary Schools in order that the boys may be forced to proceed to the war in South Africa, and the girls pressed into the service as washerwomen and attendants on the British Army.

"His Excellency the Governor trusts that all persons in the employment of the Government, in whatsoever capacity, and all loyal subjects of His Majesty, will use their best endeavours to contradict the false reports above-mentioned, and the misleading statement that the Government is promoting the teaching of reading and writing through the medium of the Maltese language and the spread of the English language, in order that British Subjects domiciled in Malta may be forced to emigrate, or caused to lose their means of livelihood in these Islands."

From the Return issued on 18th June 1901, by the Inspector of Elementary Schools, it appears that the parents of more than 82 per cent. of the children attending the Third Standard that year had chosen for them to be taught English, and less than 18 per cent. had preferred Italian. Nevertheless, as Mr Chamberlain pointed out in another Despatch of 30th July, the agitators had openly announced as their policy the refusal of all taxation and public improvements, even those most necessary to the health and comfort of the poor, until they should secure their ends. This was an abuse of Constitutional powers justifying an amendment of the Constitution. He preferred to adopt a temporary alternative—in the hope that the Elected Members of the Council would before long

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be induced to follow a wiser and more patriotic course. It was, therefore, decided that the necessary legislation should be carried by Orders in Council. The subjects to be thus dealt with were the construction of new schools, the extension of drainage and water works, certain additions to hospitals and asylums, various street improvements, and similar administrative business—all of which had been obstructed in the Council. The total extra expenditure was about £380,000, and to raise this sum the necessary legislation would be recommended to His Majesty in Council.

Their objects exposed and their arguments refuted, these indefatigable agitators were by no means defeated. They persuaded the Italian Government to take up their case and make representations to our Foreign Office, as if some slight were being placed by the British on the Italian race. The moment was cleverly chosen. It so happened that the old cordial understanding between the Courts of St James's and Rome had been slightly clouded by what was represented as our disregard of Italian interests in South Africa, and the Language Question in Malta was seized upon as an opportunity for proving our friendly feeling. On 28th January 1902, Mr Chamberlain had to announce in the House of Commons that the Proclamation would be withdrawn as to the substitution of English for Italian as the official language. In making the concession, however, he explained, in a neat and concise argument, that no grievance had ever existed in Malta or would have been created if the Proclamation had been maintained. But he did not wish any kind of misunderstanding with regard to Italy to prevail, and, therefore,

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if he could believe that, by the offer of a compromise in this matter, he would remove any feeling which existed among our good allies, the Italians, and at the same time remove any feeling of a similar kind which existed among a certain class in Malta, then he would without hesitation formally withdraw the Proclamation at once. He would withdraw it at once, without any conditions, and was perfectly willing to trust to the future.

"He was perfectly ready to withdraw the Proclamation, and he thought that was, at all events, an intelligible concession. He hoped it would be regarded as such by the persons to whom he had referred, and he hoped that they would now look at those questions of taxation as the Government should expect them to do in any ordinary time. He did not deny their right to criticise the proposals of the Government, and to control them in the last resort, but to refuse absolutely necessary Votes of money, for purposes from which their own Constituences would derive benefits, whether it was to show spite to the Government or was done in order to affect the decision of the Government in regard to some other question, was not in accord with Parliamentary institutions, and he sincerely trusted that that course of action would be abandoned. If, however, the state of things prevailing at present were to continue, the Elected Members of the Maltese Council would be guilty of suicide. They could not expect a Government which was responsible for a great Imperial Fortress to allow this childish game to proceed indefinitely, and it would clearly be the duty of any Government under these circumstances to go back to the conditions which existed before 1847, or to make such modi-

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fications of the Constitution as would be necessary to give the Government a controlling voice in the administration. He made no threat, but had endeavoured to treat this question in a conciliatory way, and he hoped no drastic process might be necessary."

In Italy itself this act of friendliness was accepted in the spirit in which it had been offered. But the Maltese Italians, not without reason, plumed themselves on having beaten the British Government, and at once renewed their agitation for further concessions. Within the Colony it cannot be denied that the action forced on Mr Chamberlain was an unfortunate precedent, though it was, perhaps, excused by the International object which it was meant to serve.

Although it is extremely probable that by 1914 English will have become the common language in Malta, and may, by that time, have been adopted for official purposes, it was, perhaps, a mistake to announce the change so long in advance. But this was not the real crux of the controversy. The Italian Party in the Island wished to preserve their language artificially, by making it a compulsory subject in the Elementary Public Schools. The Colonial Office did not propose to make English compulsory, but insisted that the parents of the children should be permitted to choose between the two languages, and on this point the authorities refused to give way. It was further intimated, and was quite understood in the Island, that if the Italian Party should persist in refusing the necessary Votes for Supply, the Constitution would be so altered that the Official Members of the Council would be made a permanent majority. The warning, however, was soon dis-

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regarded, and it has recently been found necessary to carry out the threatened changes.

A passing reference must also be made to the enlargement, for defensive purposes, of the Colony of Hong-Kong by the Chinese cession of the Kowloon and Mirs Bay; the cession of the islands of Choiseul and Isabel in the Solomon group under the Samoan Treaty with Germany; the question of the transfer of Norfolk Island to the Government of New South Wales; the controversy on Land Legislation in Ceylon; the agitation in Cyprus for union with Greece; and the rioting at Port of Spain, Trinidad, which had to be suppressed by force, and was afterwards made the subject of a Commission of Inquiry. Nothing even of local importance seems to have passed through the Colonial Office without the Secretary of State having given it a share of his individual attention. Whoever will take a map of the British Empire will be unable to place a finger upon any portion of it—outside the Foreign Office Protectorates—where Mr Chamberlain, in one way or another, has not made himself felt. His power of direction and control has been exercised in small affairs as well as in great, and in the islands of the Pacific, the Straits Settlements, New Guinea, and other Possessions of which the British public hears but little, his strong personality is as fully recognised as in South Africa and the Self-Governing Colonies.

It would be absurd for his admirers to give him the whole credit for all the administrative reforms which have been carried out in his name. Many of them have been suggested to him, and the execution superintended, by members of the official staff in Downing Street; many others are

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due to the enterprise and energy of men on the spot. But it is astonishing how closely he has watched the work of his subordinates in every outlying corner of the British Empire, and how unmistakably his inspiration may be traced, how clearly his thoughts and even his language have been reproduced, in dealing with the numberless questions that go through his Department. It is pointed out elsewhere that he spares no pains in selecting and encouraging good men, but, like every other English administrator, he is sometimes hampered by the difficulty of getting rid of inefficient, though personally blameless, public servants. As soon as a second-class man has got into a first-rate position, the cheapest thing to do with him—if only the country would see it—is to make him a K.C.B. and retire him on his full salary.

It is not fair, perhaps, to place an absolutely literal interpretation on the words which a Statesman uses at a complimentary dinner. But at the Corona Club Banquet held last June, the Colonial Secretary seemed to be speaking from his heart.

"I never felt," he said, "so proud of my country or of my countrymen as when I saw them at work in these distant lands. My Lords and gentlemen, I had another opportunity which I greatly prized, and that was an opportunity of seeing Downing Street from outside and from a distance. Seen near, its architecture leaves much to be desired, but the further you go from it, believe me, the greater it appears. And yet the experience which I have had enables me, as, perhaps, never before, to put myself in the position of those who are working out our policy abroad, and who find themselves controlled and

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praised—and it may be blamed—by the central organisation. I can see perfectly well how a man, filled as he should be with the local aspect of the question with which he has to deal, may be discouraged when he finds that his proposals, submitted after the greatest care in their preparation, are criticised and, as he thinks, curtly dismissed by the clerks in Downing Street, and, on the other hand, I know my Downing Street also, and they sometimes must be disappointed that, in spite of all they do, of the pains that they take to make themselves understood, they find that those abroad misunderstand their instructions, ignore the great traditions, which are not founded upon pedantry or red tape, but which are the historic product of centuries almost of continuous administration —when they find those traditions ignored, and the cherished principles upon which our policy depends more or less disregarded."

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE SOUTH AFRICAN SETTLEMENT

WHEN the Delegates at Vereeniging "stood at the grave of the two Republics" they appointed a Committee to raise funds on behalf of Boer sufferers from the War, and detached Generals De Wet, Louis Botha, and Delarey from that body to collect subscriptions in Europe. Almost at once, however, this inoffensive enterprise assumed the proportions of a political mission—the real or, at least, the main object of the Generals being to modify the terms of the Treaty to which they had just put their hands. They arrived at Southampton just as a great Naval Review was being held by the newly-crowned Sovereign, which it was hoped they would witness. It was not unnatural, though it may have been impolitic, that the sore-hearted men should display no enthusiasm over the friendly greetings they received, but preserve an attitude of chilly reserve. Their presence at this demonstration of the naval power of Great Britain, even though they would have come as popular guests and honoured subjects of the King, might to their minds suggest an unpleasant resemblance to captives gracing the Triumph of a Roman conqueror. In a brief interview with Mr Chamberlain they declined the invitation, urging

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personal reasons which called for their immediate departure. But, after a flying visit to London, where they were received with gushing adulation by the politicians of the pavement, they returned to Southampton, and on 18th August were presented to the King on board the Royal Yacht, and taken for a trip round the Fleet at Spithead. A visit was paid to The Hague, and after holding conference with Mr Krüger, Dr Leyds, and other Boer representatives, they telegraphed to Mr Chamberlain from Brussels, requesting an opportunity to "submit and discuss questions of the greatest importance and interest to our country and people."

Mr Chamberlain replied, through our Minister at Brussels, that he had hoped to have a preliminary discussion with them on the Solent, but he would come up to London to meet them on 2nd September. He would, however, like to know beforehand the subjects on which the Generals wished to see him, and asked for a list to be sent to the Colonial Office. The invitation for the 2nd was accepted, and the list submitted covered eleven points. The chief were a complete Amnesty for British subjects who had assisted the Boers in the War, and pardon for all persons convicted of acts committed during its continuance; a sufficient allowance for the widows and orphans of Burghers, and for maimed Burghers; equality of the English and Dutch languages in schools and law courts; equal rights for Burghers and British subjects, including the return of all Burghers to South Africa, whether prisoners of war or self-exiled politicians in Europe; reinstatement of Boer officials, or compensation for loss of office; compensation for loss of private property during the War; reinstatement of Burghers in the

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ownership of farms confiscated under the Proclamation of 7th August 1901; payment of the obligations of the late Republics, including those incurred during the War, and rescission of the determination to give Natal a new boundary covering a portion of the Transvaal. The Generals also proposed to discuss the execution of the terms of surrender, objecting in particular to the Oath of Allegiance being demanded as a condition precedent to the repatriation of prisoners of war.

Mr Chamberlain (25th August) expressed his unaffected surprise at the number and character of these proposals. He reminded the Generals of the history of the Peace negotiations, since March 1901, and, in regard to the terms of surrender, said there was no parallel in history for conditions so generous being granted by a victorious belligerent. He was willing to discuss the interpretation of those terms, but the eleven points put forward constituted a suggestion for an entirely new Agreement, inconsistent with and even contradictory to the Vereeniging compact. It was not his duty to enter upon any discussion of such proposals. Both parties were bound by the conditions arranged, and he had no power to reopen any of the points then settled as to the repatriation of prisoners, Amnesty to rebels, the use of the Dutch language, and the grants of money and loans to the people of the new Colonies. The Generals sent a temporising reply, resting their plea for an interview on the broad grounds of clemency and the interests of the people, and assuring Mr Chamberlain that they did not seek to meet him as parties claiming the right to make a fresh contract or substitute a modified agreement for that already in existence.

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But they did not explicitly accept the condition which he had imposed, that there should be no attempt to reopen the terms of surrender. These conditions were insisted on by Mr Chamberlain, and finally the Boer Generals, "forced by the circumstances in which we are placed," gave the required formal assurance, and on 5th September an interview was held at the Colonial Office. The Generals were accompanied by Mr J. H. de Villiers as interpreter, and Mr Chamberlain had the assistance of the presence of Lord Onslow, Under-Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Kitchener, and Mr F. Graham, Assistant Under-Secretary.

At the outset the Boers denied that it was their intention to alter the terms of surrender in any way. Mr Chamberlain having drily remarked that he was very glad to hear it, they raised the question of Amnesty, and urged that everything on behalf of the persons affected should be brought before the Commission which the Government had sent out to deal with the subject. Mr Chamberlain then shortly explained what were the duties of the Commission in examining the sentences on rebels. The Boers complained that Lord Kitchener had given a promise at Pretoria that he would recommend an Amnesty at the time of the Coronation, and that the rebels had not been pardoned. Mr Chamberlain pointed out that the only undertaking was that Natal, being a Self-Governing Colony, should deal with her own rebels—and she had amnestied them liberally. Lord Kitchener did not admit making any such promise as the Boers alleged; the statement about Natal was the final and definitive statement. The conversation then dealt with the return of the prisoners, and it

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was explained to them that every one could not be sent at once, and that repatriation would proceed with all possible expedition. The Generals had been misinformed when they were told that there had been any refusal to return prisoners who had either taken the Oath of Allegiance or made a Declaration—the latter had been in the nature of a concession to those who declined to swear, the form of it having been agreed upon, between Lord Milner and Boer leaders, before the Generals left South Africa. Passing to another subject, Mr Chamberlain had to correct a misapprehension, on the part of the Boer Generals, that Burghers had been, or would be, deprived of their farms: the only power taken by the State was that of acquiring land for public purposes on the payment of full compensation.

On Article X. complaint was made of the composition of the Commissions appointed to regulate the distribution of the £3,000,000 for restarting the Boers in their occupations, and strong exception was taken to the inclusion in those bodies of Boers who had fought on the British side in the latter stages of the War. Mr Chamberlain, however, made a spirited defence of the employment of National Scouts on the Commissions, offering, however, to make inquiries into any specific instances of alleged unfitness or wrong-doing. The Generals next complained of the extension of the Natal border, and said the Boers would leave the Vryheid and Utrecht districts if this were persisted in. Mr Chamberlain reminded them that this was a closed question, and suggested that they should advise the Boer inhabitants to remain: it was not credible, their numbers being what they were, that they

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would be down-trodden, or in any way unfairly treated. The conversation then branched off into the question of the status of foreigners who had become Burghers of the Republics. Mr Chamberlain roundly declared that he had no sympathy with foreigners who had meddled with a quarrel which was not their own—foreigners who had been given Burgher rights as a reward for taking part in a conflict in which they were not concerned. Naturalisation had been granted them in order that they should fight against Great Britain. They were not required to forswear allegiance to their parent State. The British Government would treat them as foreigners: such of them as were prisoners of war had accordingly been sent back to their own countries. "We decline altogether," said Mr Chamberlain, "to recognise them as Burghers in South Africa."

There were other subjects, the Generals hinted, which they would like to discuss in writing. The £3,000,000, for example, they did not think at all adequate for the purposes to which it was being applied. Something might be done for the widows and orphans. "You have got so many assets in the country," was the ingenuous suggestion of General Botha. Mr Chamberlain's reply may be quoted:—

"Well, I think we had better not enter upon discussion in detail upon points of that kind. I would only remind the General that we have undertaken many obligations already, more than has ever been undertaken before in similar circumstances. I do not wish to enter into any discussion, any elaborate discussion, but I will take one case. The General suggests that we might make provision for the widows and orphans of those who have been killed—of those who have

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fought against us. Well, in my time I recollect very well the great Civil War in America, and I appeal to that, because that stands out as a case in which more than ever before, or indeed ever since, the victor, the conqueror, showed a magnanimous and generous feeling to the conquered. There was good reason for it, because they were brothers, of the same race, the same religion, the same everything. It was a Civil War, but even in that case the Northern side, that is to say the victorious side, made no provision whatever, either by way of grant or pension or allowances, to people who had been wounded — to the side that had been conquered. They gave them their lives, they gave them their liberties, and after a period of about ten years they gave them their votes, but they did not give them any money compensation. But we have gone one step beyond that, because we have contributed, in addition to all our own enormous expenses, a very large sum to relieve those who are really destitute in our new Colonies. We have done more than, I think, was expected of us, and we have done all that we can afford to do, and I think it would be undesirable that the General should press us any further in the matter either now or in writing.

"As regards the general statement which he has made, I desire to reciprocate it. We want, in this country at any rate, to forget and to forgive, because if you think, as you well may, that you have something to forgive, we also think that we have a great deal to forgive; but we want to put all that on one side. The War is over. We each of us fought as well as we knew how during the War. Now there is Peace. All we want is to recognise you as fellow-subjects with ourselves, working, as we shall work, for the prosperity and

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the liberty of South Africa. How great that liberty is, how soon complete Self-Government is extended to South Africa, depends entirely upon the rapidity with which the old animosities die out. Anything in the nature of recrimination nowadays would be an injury, and would tend to delay the complete pacification which I think we both desire. We shall certainly show trust in you whenever you will show trust in us. We shall be very glad of your co-operation, and of the co-operation of men like yourselves who have loyally accepted the new situation in securing that your special views and ideas are, at all events, represented in the Government, as well as those of other sections of the population. We want South Africa to be a happy abiding place for all who live in it, not for one class alone, not for one section, for one race, or for one political Party, but for all, and our duty is to regard the interest of all, and we desire that no section should be entirely unrepresented. I am sure that if you meet us half way you will find us to be in the future quite as good friends as we have been, I hope, loyal enemies in the past."

That statement closed the Conference. It will be seen that Mr Chamberlain refused to be drawn into any controversy that might have the effect of modifying the terms of surrender, though he cleared away certain misapprehensions that may have existed in the mind of the Generals. By the immediate publication of the Correspondence leading to the Conference, and of the report of the deliberations, he enabled the Generals to see that neither inside nor outside the Colonial Office were they likely to obtain favourable consideration for proposals calculated to undermine the Vereeniging arrangement. In these circum-

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stances the Generals turned to Europe for sympathy and financial help, and issued from Amsterdam an "Appeal to the Civilised World."* The cash contributions which they obtained from their tour were pitifully disproportionate to the "sympathy" of the Continent, and in November they made up their minds to return to South Africa, there to resume their conferences with Mr Chamberlain in the hope of obtaining further financial assistance from the Imperial Government.

It is needless here to retrace the various negotiations attempted, directly or indirectly, by the other Boer politicians who had taken up their residence at Brussels, The Hague, or elsewhere in Europe. It was, no doubt, largely due to their advice and encouragement that the War had been prolonged nearly half-way through the year 1902. Owing to their obdurate belief that something might happen which would save the two Republics from extinction, the Burghers still under arms were kept on fighting—willingly enough, many of them—long after success, from the military point of view, had been proved impossible. For this persistence in a lost cause severe blame has been thrown on the ex-President, on Dr Leyds, and their colleagues —especially as they shared personally none of the hardships which they imposed on their countrymen. They were mistaken, we know, and in the result they did nothing but mischief, yet it cannot be denied, by those who try to judge their conduct impartially, that in playing against time they played the game with extraordinary skill and indomitable moral courage. Even to the last, it is to be feared, they were supported in their blind faith by English sympathisers. But

* See Appendix VI.

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whether they were patriots or egotists, or a little of both, the British Government were entitled to ignore them. The sole Boer representatives of the people whom we could recognise were the men who had continued in the field and had signed the Treaty of submission. The only form taken by that European intervention from which so much had been hoped was a courteous offer of mediation put forward by the Dutch Premier. This, of course, was politely declined by our Foreign Office.

But neither then nor at any other period would it have been possible for an external Power, however friendly and impartial, to assist in pacifying the old feud between the British and Dutch stocks in South Africa. In making Peace, as in waging War, we asked for no help and would accept no mediation. The settlement must proceed from within. But how was the movement for conciliation to be started? The passions raised by War had by no means passed away when Peace was signed. Between the fighting Boers and the British soldiers a mutual feeling of sportsmanlike respect had, no doubt, grown up. Lord Kitchener who had organised the unrelenting machinery through which victory was slowly achieved was by no means unpopular among the men whom he had vanquished. But the Cape Dutch who had waited in vain for a chance of taking part in the struggle—the politicians who had hoped to profit by a War in which they did not join and by an insurrection that they dared not openly foment—were never more disaffected than when the Treaty of Vereeniging had just been signed.

By Constitutional theory, of course, and also by personal inclination, the High Commissioner was

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neutral between British and Dutch—in the newly annexed territories as well as in the two old Colonies. But in the course of the War he had, inevitably, been so closely identified with one side that he was regarded with natural, if undeserved, suspicion by the other. The case was somewhat different with the Colonial Secretary. The very fact that he operated from a distance invested him with an impartiality which it was less easy to discern in his local representative. This was thoroughly realised by Lord Milner, and it was, therefore, in full accordance with his wishes that Mr Chamberlain decided to visit South Africa and make acquaintance with the leaders of every Party and representatives of every interest. It was at once made clear that he would start with no preconceived policy, and that his journey would be undertaken with the object of acquiring local information and receiving suggestions from any and every quarter.

On 25th November 1902, Mr and Mrs Chamberlain bade farewell at Victoria Station to the Prime Minister, Lord Roberts, and other high officials, and embarked at Portsmouth in the cruiser *Good Hope*. At Cairo his journey was broken by a short visit to Lord Cromer, where he paid an interesting tribute to young Englishmen of the type selected and trained for Imperial work by great administrators like his host.

At Mombasa he disembarked, and was taken for a trip on the new Uganda Railway—the subject of so many Parliamentary discussions, in some of which he had taken part. At a banquet given to him by the British in Zanzibar he regretted that so much of the trade with that Protectorate had fallen into the hands of foreigners, and reaffirmed his hope—his belief

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—that the British Government would always be ready to protect the interests of the outlying portions of the Empire. Nor did he leave East Africa without inquiring into the possibility of Native Labour being recruited in that region for mines in the Rand. The *Good Hope* arrived at Durban on 26th December, and, after saying a few words of thanks for the enthusiastic greeting received from the inhabitants of the Colony which had borne the worst heat and burden of the War, he settled down to business. The operation of Sugar Bounties, the restrictions imposed on the immigration of Hindoo coolies, and the disloyal propaganda carried on by negro "missionaries" from America, were among the local questions which he was invited to consider. His first public words were intended to breathe the spirit of his mission :—

"The issue," he said, "has been decided. The British flag is, and will be, and must be, paramount throughout South Africa. The losses we have suffered, the sacrifices we have made, must not be thrown away. Reconciliation should be easy. We hold out our hand, and we ask the Dutch to take it frankly, and in the spirit in which it is tendered. There is no cause to despair. The differences are not greater than those that once divided the Scotch and English, or the French and English in Canada. I come in the spirit of conciliation ; but I come also in the spirit of firmness. Federation is a great aim, but it would be a greater mistake to hasten its conclusion prematurely."

At Pietermaritzburg he was confronted with what he considered exorbitant claims for compensation on account of losses suffered during the War — some of the Boer delegates who

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addressed him evidently considering that they should all be fully reimbursed for any depreciation in their properties. His interview with the Natal Ministers was, of course, confidential, but, in reply to a deputation of Native Christians, he said quite plainly that while the coloured population would be scrupulously protected in their personal rights they must not cherish any hope of political equality. Mr Chamberlain has not studied American life for nothing! At a public banquet, on the 25th, he dwelt on the advantage of personal intercourse between Imperial and Colonial Statesmen, and declared that his recent Conference with the Colonial Premiers had been very valuable. The War, he added, was not without its compensations: it had proved the strength of Great Britain, her determination to protect her Colonies and their loyalty to the Imperial connection. On the next evening he gave an outline of the present intentions of the Imperial Government with regard to the new Colonies. He was, he said, perfectly aware that sooner or later South Africa would follow the example of Canada and Australia. Such a consummation could not be imposed by the Imperial Government, but, while the Mother Country would not interfere in such a matter, it would heartily rejoice when the new Constitution for a Federated South Africa were demanded. It would add strength and prosperity to the country; but, in order to secure those blessings, they would have to make sacrifices, and not Natal alone. There must be a policy of give-and-take. If the projected Conference was to secure substantial results, each Colony must enter it with a determination to contribute its full share. If Canada and Australia had found it necessary to federate, there were special reasons for South Africa doing

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the same thing, for there was there a small white population in the presence of many times more numerous blacks. Under civilised government the blacks would multiply rapidly, and it behoved the white population to be strong and united if the problem was to be dealt with effectively. They must not decide how the problem was to be solved until they had satisfied themselves what was the best way.

Although he was favourable, he said, to Federation in the abstract, it must never be forgotten that accompanying Federation there must be the concession of Responsible Government to the new Colonies. It was perfectly clear that this concession could not be made immediately. The populations of the new Colonies were in an abnormal state. Industry had not yet recovered from the effects of the War, and it was ridiculous to assume that a body now elected would be fairly representative of the people of the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies. Again, they had the right, before the question of granting Self-Government was considered, to ask their Boer friends to furnish them with some evidence of active loyalty. It would be a grave dereliction of Imperial duty for His Majesty's Government to put into power any individuals or Party who might seek to undo by political agitation the work that had been so painfully accomplished by force of arms.

A visit to the memorable field of Colenso preceded the entry into Ladysmith, where Mr Chamberlain promised that the Government would recognise any receipt given by a British officer for goods supplied in the War, and generally would satisfy all legitimate claims—but, he added, it would be a bad day for the

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Empire when people began to reckon loyalty in a ledger account.

From Ladysmith he passed to Standerton, and it was not until he crossed the frontier at Charlestown on 3rd January 1903, that he met the High Commissioner and Sir Arthur Lawley, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal. At Pretoria on the 5th General Cronje and Dr Smuts were presented to him, and he renewed his acquaintance with General Botha and General Delarey. In reference to the contribution towards the expenses of the War, which he hoped to obtain from the owners of the gold mines, he remarked that "if they sent him away empty-handed he would bow to their decision." As a matter of fact, he had no intention of failing altogether in so important an object, but he considered it both more graceful and more diplomatic to regard any sum that he might induce them to grant as a free offering, not as a forced requisition. He hoped, for one thing, that an appeal to the good feeling of the Rand millionaires would be more fruitful than any demand made as of right, which would have to be supported by statistical arguments to which their unrivalled financial dexterity might set up a specious reply. He was unwilling, in the second place, to give foreign critics, or political adversaries at home, a pretext for saying that the British Government were exacting a harsh indemnity from the conquered territory. How far his reliance on the patriotism of the Rand was justified will be seen hereafter.

At a banquet on the 5th, both Lord Milner and Mr Chamberlain were surprised and annoyed at being confronted by a local lawyer, with a

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demand for the speedy restoration of Representative Government. For the present, the speaker said he would be content with Crown Colony Government provided there were "a little less Crown and a little more Colony." The High Commissioner gave a bantering reply, and the Colonial Secretary took the same tone, but both quite decidedly refused even to discuss the subject on an occasion when they had not expected to be plied with controversial inquiries. The incident was piquant but unimportant, except as showing that Mr Chamberlain did not mean to have his decision "rushed" by any political group, whether British or Dutch—nor would he modify the administration established by Lord Milner until he had thoroughly examined its operation.

But his more immediate duty was to explain himself to the Boer Leaders. The policy of the Government was one of conciliation. But it would not be conciliation to satisfy opponents and alienate friends. Though it was the duty of the British to work for the alliance and fusion of the two white races in South Africa, there was a reciprocal duty with the Boers—especially with their Leaders.

"I rejoice," he said, "to see them at this board. The leaders of the Boers accepted, in terms as frank as any one can desire, the result of the War and the terms of settlement. I absolutely accept their assurances, which I believe to be a matter of perfect sincerity. We are going to carry out the terms of that settlement in the spirit and in the letter, and we expect that they will do the same. Henceforth we are one nation under one flag. We have left the past behind. I know it is said that the past carries

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with it bitter memories So it does, but not for one side alone. What we both have to do is to forget the past, and look forward to the future."

It was a broad hint, but the Boer Leaders ignored it—they had to consider and play up to the expectations of their countrymen. On being joined by General De Wet, they held a meeting at which, while employing the most loyal expressions towards "our Government," they formulated demands that only stopped short of claiming Independence. And even on that point General De Wet declared that he was not without hope. The Boers would behave so nicely that the British would say "You are a good and brave people, take your country back."

How far they expected to carry the requests which they put forward, it is impossible to say. Any hope of success in talking over Mr Chamberlain was given up on 8th January when they received his reply to their Memorial. He told them plainly that their constant and repeated claims were regarded with growing impatience. They were excellent at making a bargain, but did not understand that when made it should be adhered to. They had accepted the Treaty of Vereeniging, and must abide by it. No promise of Amnesty for the Rebels was contained in the terms—they were left to be dealt with by the laws of the Colonies to which they belonged. As a matter of fact, hundreds of sentences had been remitted, and others had been largely reduced. And how had the Boers treated their own Rebels? They shot, imprisoned, and sjamboked them! Though the Imperial Government did not close the door to further clemency, nothing would be yielded to

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pressure. With regard to permitting the return of the Boers who had been engaged on European missions, no terms had been agreed to. Let them give some proof of their good disposition—by explaining, for instance, how they had expended the large sums of money sent out for their use, and by handing over any balance to a Committee for the relief of distress. As for the extension of the Natal boundary, that was fixed and irrevocable, and Mr Chamberlain pointed out that the inhabitants of Vryheid and Utrecht would be at once invested with full civic rights. On the Language question, the Government would adhere to the terms of the Treaty but always be willing to listen to any complaints on this subject.

On the same day he travelled to Johannesburg, and at once entered into negotiation with the chief representatives of the mining industry. In thanking them for the Addresses of Welcome, he said that he had come to strengthen the hand of the High Commissioner in the gigantic task to which he had directed such conspicuous ability. Lord Milner had come as a friend to that community. When they were oppressed and insulted, he had supported their appeal to the Imperial Government. He had never joined in the calumnies uttered against them—he had constantly denounced the men who had always found their own country in the wrong.

"There was yet another calumny!" he remarked. "It is said that you are prepared to repudiate your share of the expenditure. I will wait and see. I do not believe that men who have faced such dangers will show more care for their purses than for their lives."

That the Johannesburghers would consent to make some substantial contribution towards the

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expenses of the War, was from the beginning assumed. But the amount of the taxation that the mines would bear was for several days a matter of keen debate between the Colonial Secretary and the chief representatives of the gold industry—though one important financier and his associates refused to take part in the informal conference. Mr Chamberlain might reasonably have expected to obtain a much larger sum than was eventually conceded. Although nearly the whole of any taxation to be imposed on the Transvaal Colony must be paid by the mine-owners, he pointed out that the interests of Town and Country, of British and Boer, were not altogether distinct. While prosperity in Johannesburg would bring custom to the farmers on the Veldt, the encouragement of agriculture would stimulate production, and tend to reduce the exorbitant expenses of living in that city. This was undeniable, but the spokesmen of the Rand made clever and effective use of the difficulty which had been found since the War in recruiting Kaffirs for the mines. The natives, never fond of work, had earned large wages during the War, and were not disposed to take employment except at rates much heavier than the mine-owners were ready to pay. It was represented, therefore, that the industry had been brought almost to a stand-still, and that the prospects of recovery were somewhat uncertain. Things might improve, the mine-owners suggested, if the Government of the Colony would lay direct or indirect pressure on the Kaffirs, or if the Imperial Government would sanction the importation of Asiatic labour. But on neither of these points, which were certain to lead to sharp controversy in England, was it possible for the Colonial Secretary to give a

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definite assurance. He was, therefore, compelled to accept the terms which he announced on 16th January.

Briefly, the Imperial Government would propose a Bill in Parliament to guarantee a loan of £35,000,000 secured on the assets (united for that purpose) of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony—a Development Loan, which could be devoted to paying off the public liabilities, buying up the railways, and constructing new lines. It would also provide for Public Works (such as irrigation) and the Land Settlement. In the second place, another Loan of £30,000,000 would be issued in annual instalments of £10,000,000—a War Debt, secured on the assets of the Transvaal, the first £10,000,000 to be taken up by the group of financiers with whom Mr Chamberlain had been engaged in conference. Having agreed to these terms, he made the best of the bargain, and declared that it would be accepted by the people of the Mother Country as an adequate and liberal recognition on the part of the Colony of its duty to the Empire at large, and of the gratitude which it had so frequently expressed, and which he believed it sincerely felt, towards the Mother Nation which had come to its assistance in the time of need. It was subsequently proposed by the Johannesburghers to raise the Development Loan from £35,000,000 to £40,000,000, and Mr Chamberlain's reasons for dissent are given in an official account of the interview, published (April 1903) in "Papers relating to the Finances of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony."

It is impossible here even to summarise the other contents of that very interesting Blue-book, but in fairness to the Rand repre-

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sentatives it should be said that their estimate of their own taxable capacity has been accepted by the High Commissioner. Probably, therefore, it does not err so much as was at first believed on the side of fiscal modesty. At the same time, they may safely be credited with having exercised, in their negotiations with Mr Chamberlain, the same commercial acumen as they had previously displayed in building up their industrial undertakings. On the other hand, in accepting what he had studiously represented as a voluntary contribution, it was not open for the representative of the Imperial Government to complain that the amount was insufficient. Nor has he, since his return, complained that the contribution was lacking in generosity. He followed generally in his speech in May in the House of Commons the statements and inferences contained in the Blue Book, and also pointed out that about £6,000,000 of the £35,000,000 to be raised as a Development Loan would be used in the repayment of advances which had been made by the British Government, so that the full relief given to our Exchequer would be not £30,000,000, but £36,000,000. As his highest estimate before going to South Africa of the total amount to be gained from the mines had not exceeded £100,000,000, and as that amount was to spread over a long period, each instalment to be received only when it could most conveniently be afforded by the gold industry, the immediate payment of £36,000,000 was a not inadequate substitute. Moreover, it had never been contemplated that the whole £100,000,000 would be handed over to the Chancellor of Exchequer, some part would have to go back to South Africa, and this was fairly represented by the Development Loan of

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£35,000,000. The net result of his negotiations was, then, that instead of £100,000,000 spread over a number of years, he accepted, on behalf of Great Britain, a War contribution of £30,000,000 (*plus* £6,000,000, repayment of debt), and £29,000,000 to be spent in the purchase of railways and other forms of industrial development in South Africa.

On the Labour question it was necessary for the Colonial Secretary to practise a certain amount of reserve. The white working-men throughout South Africa are hotly opposed to the licensed immigration of Asiatic coolies, and already were declaring that it was to obtain this favour that the mine-owners were subscribing to the cost of the War. The problem appeared to Mr Chamberlain to be one which should be left to the Colony to settle for itself. It was not a case in which the Imperial Government should interfere on either side.* Meantime, Mr Chamberlain's brief visit to the East Coast had convinced him that no great stock of natives could be drawn from the regions North of the Zambesi, and the officials had impressed on him the danger of importing the "sleeping sickness" into South Africa. Nor could any great amount of white labour be hired, since Europeans of the better type refuse to work alongside Kaffirs —moreover, they are so expensive that only the more thriving mines can support them. It

* To the decision not to interfere in a matter which concerns the Colonists themselves he has firmly adhered since his return from South Africa. If the general sense of the Colony were in favour of admitting Asiatic labour he should not oppose it, but he should require reasonable proof that it was a policy which the Transvaal would approve if it were a Self-Governing Colony (House of Commons, July 28, 1903).

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would be desirable, no doubt, if it were possible, to establish a strong class of white working-men —if only as a counterpoise to the black element which is so rapidly increasing in the population of the towns. But this the mine-owners do not regard as practicable nor, in fact, do they wish it to be done. Nothing would be more inconvenient to the Directors and Shareholders than for the wages and conditions of labour in the mines to be controlled by a powerful Trade Union run on English lines.

Whatever may be the ultimate solution of this problem, it appeared, or was made to appear, that there was but one expedient in the early months of 1903 — to seek to induce the coloured population to return to underground work. Mr Chamberlain expressed himself as not unalterably opposed to some method of indirect compulsion, as, *e.g.*, by imposing a tax which they could only pay by working for wages. He had seen with his own eyes the black idlers in the streets of Pretoria and Johannesburg; naturally, he regarded them as somewhat unfavourable exemplars of unrestrained personal liberty—nor was he yet aware how far these town loafers are from representing either the typical vices or virtues of their race. "We have abolished slavery," he said, "in theory; but philanthropists at home would be astonished to learn that we were encouraging it in another form. The Kaffir works long enough to enable him to live in idleness for the rest of his days. He buys a wife—or, if he is unusually energetic and ambitious, two or three—and these women are, to all intents and purposes, his slaves." Mr Chamberlain, however, did not propose a measure of industrial coercion. It might very well lead to a Kaffir rebellion.

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As a temporary and partial relief, however, he arranged with the Foreign Office that the Nyassaland region should be opened for the voluntary enlistment of a limited number of miners, whose payment and conditions of labour were to be regulated under strict official supervision. Lord Milner has recently declared that "there are simply not enough natives in South Africa, if they all worked, for our growing requirements." He favours, therefore, the importation of Indian coolies for the railways, so as to set more Kaffirs free for the mines and agriculture.

If the visit to Johannesburg had resulted in a substantial, rather than a generous, contribution to the expenses of the War, broadly it had been successful. Mr Chamberlain had brought the Rand into hearty accord with himself personally, and with Colonial Office administration generally. There was no more demand for an immediate grant of local Self-Government, and there was much less grumbling, for the time at least, against the young officials whom Lord Milner had appointed to carry out his policy. Mr Chamberlain carried his audience with him when he indulged in a characteristic fling at the group of financiers who had not taken part in guaranteeing the War Loan. "We must go to London," he said, "to hear that the Transvaal is anxious to throw off the yoke of Downing Street at once! Downing Street is ready to abdicate, but you do not desire that your political opponents should secure by political agitation what they have failed to secure by the sword: you do not desire to reproduce here the position in Cape Colony, where the majority of the British pray to be relieved of

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privileges which they believe to have been abused by others. Neither British nor Boer desires to be rid of Downing Street and to substitute Park Lane! Continue your confidence in Lord Milner." His final words were an appeal to the broader conceptions of Patriotism.

"The day of small Kingdoms with petty jealousies," he said, "is past. The future is with the great Empires. There is no greater Empire than the British Empire. The Mother Country has set the example. She has thrown off the apathy and indifference of past generations. No longer do we hear of Statesmen to whom separation from the Colonies is almost an object of desire. The Colonies, on their part, have reciprocated that feeling. They have abandoned Provincialism, and are agreed to claim their part in the glorious Empire which is theirs as well as ours. They are ready to undertake the obligations which go with privileges. That is the spirit which exists and which I desire shall continue.

"'Unite the Empire, make it stand compact,
Shoulder to shoulder; let its members feel
The touch of human brotherhood, and act
As one great nation, true and strong as steel.'"

Before starting for Potchefstrom Mr Chamberlain interviewed a Deputation of National Scouts to whom he made a promise that they should be protected against the "Wild" Boers who threatened to persecute them, and should be held entitled to priority in the settlement of claims arising from the War. They should have no excuse for saying that it was a bad thing to have stood by the British Government. At Potchefstrom he paid a visit to General Cronje, a party of Burghers taking the horses out of his carriage, and drawing it in triumph to the veteran soldier's

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house. Before leaving Potchefstrom he visited the settlements of Boer and British farmers in the neighbourhood, and at the Kaffir location he found a crowd of natives assembled around an arch bearing the words "Welcome Moatlodi" ("the man who puts things straight"). At Ventersdorp he was greeted in the most friendly way by General Delarey, who accompanied him on the trek to Lichtenburg. Here he had the opportunity of coming into close contact with the old-fashioned Boer farmers, of whom he had made the remark that "the more he saw of them the better he liked them." In reply to the Reception Committee he delivered a warm appeal for harmony between the two races. To the friendly Boers assembled in the Market Square, he said:—

"As I have travelled in your country, I have seen the graves of British soldiers in many places, and very often these were side by side with those of Boers who had fought against them. Now both lie together in peace. Let us, who live, live also in peace. Your sufferings are perhaps greater than ours, since they have fallen on a smaller population. You have lost your property, and everything which you hold dear. Now let us see if what the War has left behind, that is Peace, shall be a lasting Peace. Let us all join together to repair the ravages of the War, which was brought about, I believe, by a misunderstanding. You were suspicious of us, and we of you. Now let us trust each other. If there comes among you any mischief-maker from outside, tell him to mind his own business. Tell him you are grown men able to take care of yourselves. I want you to understand that the new Government will do everything

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in its power to secure greater prosperity even than was enjoyed by many of you under the old Government, which was called Progressive. Now you will have a really Progressive Government. Nations, like individuals, cannot stand still, but must go either backward or forward. We are going forward. In the first place, our business is to get you back to your lands. I hope you will understand that the Government has done everything in its power. It was an enormous business to bring back nearly a hundred thousand people, place them on their farms, and feed them so long as was necessary. At the same time, we had to consider the claims under the Peace terms for assistance and for goods taken by the Military. This was also a very great task. We have received more than a hundred thousand claims. These must be examined. Some are not honest claims; we must separate the true from the false; if the false were allowed, there would be so much less for the true.

"Lord Milner is about to issue a new notice stating exactly what will be done. We hope in a few months to close the business altogether. If there is anything in the notice that is not understood, you must make inquiries of the Magistrate, who will explain the point. When this is settled, we shall begin a new chapter in the history of the Transvaal. I am sure the Boers, who are an independent people, will be very glad when they no longer require Government assistance, and a good many will be able to go on with their business, and bring back the prosperity of former days. When the Government has finished with direct assistance, it will be able to do much indirectly. The country is very rich, but at present it is not properly developed. It wants

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men, railways, water, and trees. Large stretches of land will be more cultivated, and you will be able to bring your produce to the nearest and best market.

"The British Government has agreed to lend £35,000,000 to the Transvaal, in order to carry out your works. When these are finished, in a few years for the first time the land will have a real chance. Nature has done much, the Government will do more. There is only one thing wanting; you must not look backward but forward, and be a united people, not only at unity with the British but among yourselves. You must not carry forward the old feelings caused by the War, but must remember that the land needs the help of every son. If you adopt the principle of union, it is certain that you will soon repair the losses of the War, and your children will enjoy a prosperity such as the country has never seen before."

In a cordial speech General Delarey advised his countrymen to serve the new Government as faithfully as they had served the old. "I want you to understand," he added, "that Mr Chamberlain is a strong man. He holds the keys, and can lock and unlock."

At Mafeking Mr Chamberlain was welcomed by the Governor and the Premier of Cape Colony, and on entering a district where secret sedition was still rife his language became less conciliatory than when he had been addressing a brave people who had never professed allegiance to the Crown, but had frankly accepted the results of their vain struggle for Independence. Inspired, too, by recollections of the memorable siege he declared that the War, then happily over, was an undertaking which no other nation would have successfully carried out.

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"The War is over, and I hope it has done much to show the strength and power of the Empire, but it has done more to show its cohesion and union. From the four great Continents men of British race poured in to join the Mother Country in the time of stress, and prove that blood was thicker than water. It was a white man's War. For reasons of policy, it was considered undesirable that men other than Europeans should take part in it. Had it been otherwise, the great Empire of India could have poured in tens of thousands of valiant, stalwart troops. There is not a Colony, from the smallest to the greatest, over which I have the honour to preside, that would not have poured in troops to show that it was prepared to share in the sacrifices as well as in the privileges of the Empire. The link which bound it might appear thin as gossamer; but let an enemy try to break through—he would find it as strong as tempered steel." In reply to a "Voice," which said that he was trying to "coax the Boers," he retorted that he had not come to flatter them, but to tell them the truth. It was only the truth that they had good, strong qualities. We should like to hold the country with the Boers—we could hold it without them!

After a short halt at Vryburg where he spoke of the mischief-makers who were retarding the gift of Self-Government to the new Colonies, Mr Chamberlain drove into Kimberley, where he was enthusiastically received by the loyal inhabitants of the Diamond City. Here, having dwelt at length on the theme which he had touched at Vryburg, he passed on to the prospects of South African Federation. In that great movement the Premier Colony should take the lead. "A free

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nation is springing up," he said. "You are co-heirs with us in an Empire of greater extent than the world has ever known—partners in its privileges and its glories. Are you going to be content to be sleeping partners? You must claim a share in all that the Empire represents—claim it, as an honour and a privilege, to share our burdens and obligations." The patriotic note was taken up by the company. Unfortunately, however, Sir J. Gordon Sprigg—who, pluckily enough, had accompanied Mr Chamberlain to this stronghold of British loyalism—met with a very unfavourable reception. The cheers drawn by the Colonial Secretary's ringing appeal were mixed with hisses for the Cape Premier.

A brief visit to Bloemfontein showed that the leading inhabitants of the old Free State remained less reconciled to the results of the War than were the Boers of the Transvaal. A Deputation headed by General De Wet presented a Memorial complaining that the Terms of Peace had not been faithfully executed by the British authorities, and, amongst other things, demanding an Amnesty for Rebels, the immediate restoration of all Free State Burghers, compensation for losses arising from the War, and a cheaper Administration. In reply, Mr Chamberlain showed that no Amnesty had been promised for Rebels though many had been pardoned; that, according to the Treaty, all Burghers in the Field, and all prisoners of war, had been brought back; that the system under which compensation for losses was being administered had been fully explained; and, finally, that in spite of no fresh taxes having been imposed more was being done for the people than under any previous Administration.

The tone of the Memorial was not satis-

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factory, he remarked. If the Government were troubled with imaginary grievances he should advise it to hold its hand. It was useless to confer benefits on a people who received them without thanks and only made concession a basis for further demands. On General De Wet rising to speak, Mr Chamberlain motioned him to sit down, on which the General expressed regret that a speech from him was unwelcome —it would come like mustard after meat. Thereupon, Judge Hertzog entered upon an argument to show that the Boer Delegates in Europe were entitled under the Treaty to claim restoration. Before the interview came to an end, however, he explained that he had not intended to charge the British Government with bad faith, and General De Wet pointed out that the agitation which he threatened to conduct against the Government would be confined within strict Constitutional lines!

Before departing from Bloemfontein Mr Chamberlain complained that the National Scouts were still being persecuted by some of General De Wet's adherents, and that in this mischievous work the pastors of the Dutch Church were foremost, while one of them who had advocated conciliation had been visited with ecclesiastical penalties. Nevertheless, on going away, the Colonial Secretary expressed a hope that Representative Institutions would not long be withheld.

Returning from Bloemfontein to Cape Colony on 9th February, Mr Chamberlain received at Grahamstown such a welcome as might have been expected in "a city which for nearly a hundred years had kept untarnished its name for loyalty and patriotism." He was especially gratified, he said, that in the Address presented

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by the citizens the name of Lord Milner had been associated with his own. Incidentally, though not in express terms, he disposed of the recently revived rumour that the High Commissioner was about to be superseded, by declaring that Lord Milner enjoyed the full confidence of the Government, and if his health were preserved would remain in South Africa to complete the great trust he had undertaken.

Speaking to a Loyalist and mainly British audience, he addressed a significant appeal to the Dutch. The "chimerical idea" of a great Dutch Republic in South Africa had been dissipated for ever by the failure of the plot to expel the British authority. If such a State had ever come into existence it could not have protected itself against the ambition of the great European Powers. But the loyal British must show tolerance for fellow-Colonists who had been "rushed by men who should have known better." Finally, he asked them to remember that, while Great Britain had to pay heavily for the War, the people of Cape Colony had made a large profit out of it. The normal defence of the Empire cost the taxpayers of the United Kingdom £60,000,000 a year, and the recent hostilities had involved an outlay of nearly £250,000,000. We were able to bear the change, but there must be a limit. The cost of the South African Squadron was £400,000 a year, and the annual contribution of Cape Colony was no more than £50,000. At Port Elizabeth he spoke in much the same strain, but expressed his regret that, while animosities were dying out in the Transvaal, they appeared to be growing more intense in the old Colony. Race feeling ran very high at this time in Port Elizabeth, and Mr

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Chamberlain was somewhat reserved in his utterances, because he was anxious to say nothing that would excite the Loyalists against Sir J. Gordon Sprigg. The British, he said, could protect themselves. He was more anxious about the loyal Dutch, who were marked down for a persecution which it was our business to suppress.

He had also been in districts where reconciliation was delayed by the overbearing attitude of the British. "That ought not to be. What was keeping us apart? (cries of 'The Bond!' 'Sprigg!') I prefer to answer my own questions (laughter). Suspicion! We suspect the Dutch of want of loyalty; they suspect us of a desire to undermine their liberties and change their customs. There is no real ground of distrust. If the Dutch renounced for ever the aspirations of a separate Republic, would you not meet them half way? I accept the assurance; but we are entitled to ask for proof. There must be no persecution of loyalty."

At Graaf Reinet on 13th February, Mr Chamberlain visited a well-known hot-bed of disaffection. The Dutch inhabitants took no part in the public reception. Rebel badges were displayed in the streets, and even the more influential Dutchmen showed no sign of disapproval. These demonstrations were too open to be ignored, and the Colonial Secretary spoke in very plain terms about the disloyalty of the district, and intimated that if the Dutch wished to retain Self-Government they must show that liberty would not pass into licence. The rebellion had been absolutely without excuse. Let those who had been guilty be content that their crime had been forgiven—and not add to it. To the assurances of loyalty which he had received, he replied that they

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should give proof of it. His experiences at Middelburg were less unpleasant. Mr De Waal, the Secretary of the Africander Bond, declared that the Dutch as a body did not intend to ostracise or boycott Loyalists, but would co-operate with them for the common welfare. Mr Chamberlain had laid his hand on the sore of the body politic. This was distrust between the two races, and Mr De Waal would personally help to remove it. At Paarl, however, the Dutch inhabitants ostentatiously refrained from any show of welcome, and Mr Chamberlain again referred to the tenure on which the Constitution of the Colony was held.

"Who can say" (he remarked), "that the wants of the Paarl and the Eastern Province are the same as those of the Western districts, or the wants of Kimberley the same as those of the country districts of the Cape? The change of the political atmosphere is remarkable. Middelburg differs materially from Graaf Reinet, while Victoria West seems of a different complexion from both. I do not know yet if I can say of the Paarl whether it is loyal to the British flag, or whether—but it may be well not to put the alternative. I only note that you appreciate my refusal to suspend the Constitution. The danger to your liberties did not come from the Imperial Government or from the large minority who signed the Petition for suspension. They used arguments similar to those of the Boer Generals against an even moderately representative Government. They urged that what the country wants is peace and freedom from political agitation. The danger comes from those who fought against the Constitution, and showed themselves unworthy of the liberties conceded

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them. The Constitution must be a panacea for loyalty, not an instrument for displacing the Flag which protects you."

It was on 17th February that Mr Chamberlain entered Cape Town, where he speedily held interviews, private and public, with all the leading politicians with whom he had not previously been acquainted. His first public utterance was uncompromising, Racial antagonism, he said, had become chronic in Cape Colony, and rebellion was exalted into heroism by men in authority. Loyalty was discountenanced and estranged, and a propaganda was being carried on, in Press and in Pulpit, which tended to widen the existing separation between the races.

A Deputation from the Afrikander Bond presented an Address which was intended to justify their action in the past and explain their future policy. They had worked to prevent the Dutch in Cape Colony from acting on their "not unnatural sympathy" with the Boers, and they now accepted the Peace of Vereeniging as the beginning of a new era. On the other hand, they denounced the action of the Progressives in demanding a suspension of the Constitution. Before a "piratical raid" had been made on the Transvaal little had been heard of racial division, and the selection of the prime mover in that rebellious enterprise (Dr Jameson), as the head of a political Party was singularly unfortunate. The Colonial Secretary was asked to grant an Inquiry into the administration of Martial Law, which had too often been entrusted to violent and ignorant men, who had been misled by "local intelligence agents of strong political opinions, who used their opportunities of paying off old scores with deplorable

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results." In conclusion, the Bond deprecated the proposals for compelling the Kaffirs to work at the mines, and hoped that at no distant date South Africa would be federated on the Australian or Canadian model.

The Address was supplemented by a remarkable speech from Mr Jan Hofmeyr, whose influence over the Cape Dutch far transcends that of any other local politician — a subtle, inscrutable Statesman, who prefers to work in the background, but is absolutely sincere in his patriotism, always open to new arguments, and ready to adopt fresh expedients. Mr Chamberlain had already held long and confidential intercourse with him, and had so far succeeded in bringing him over to co-operate in the policy of conciliation that he had undertaken to issue a loyal Circular to his Dutch supporters.

It was his desire, Mr Hofmeyr said, to remove misunderstandings and promote friendly feelings. The accounts of ostracism and Boycotting practised against Loyalists were, however, much exaggerated. The leaders of the Bond reprobated all offensive acts such as wearing badges of the late Republics or singing disloyal songs. The Appeal which they would address to the people would exhort them to promote a good understanding and to work for the happiness and prosperity of the two great European Nations under the one Flag.

Accepting Mr Hofmeyr's statement that the accounts of Dutch oppressiveness had been overcoloured, Mr Chamberlain expressed his belief that the promised Circular would produce excellent results, especially in the country districts, where feeling was most bitter. In more direct reply

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to the Bond Address, he asked, "What good could be served by raking up old questions which they all agreed ought to be allowed to die down? It would be much better if the whole country were prepared to accept the Declaration of Peace as the commencement of a new era. But, while agreeing with the Bond Leaders in principle, he was afraid that their practice was not entirely in accordance with it."

Again, the Bond had made too light of Rebellion. "I admit (he said) that the ties of race and kinship were calculated to mislead men, and on the whole it is in their favour that few of the Rebels crossed the border till they were forced by the invaders to do so. Still, ten thousand revolted—which is a large proportion when estimated on the basis of ties of kinship—and more would have joined the enemy but for Martial Law. You complain that suspicion exists, but you ought to admit that as reasonable men we have some cause for suspicion. Having granted Self-Government to the Colony for a Generation, we had some right to hope and to believe that few would join in active resistance to the Government."

Nor was it historically true to say that the feud between races dated only from the Raid. It had begun twenty-five years ago, about the time of the first Annexation. As for the complaints about Martial Law, he vindicated British officers from the charge of violence and ignorance, and quoted the favourable opinion of Lord Alverstone and his colleagues on the Commission. Nor would he reopen the whole inquiry. War and Rebellion always involved misery and suffering: the innocent had to suffer with the guilty. With those who had suffered unjustly he expressed

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his sympathy. If it were possible to redress such grievances there might be reason for the inquiry demanded by the Bond. But it was not possible, and it would "open a lion's mouth, as in ancient Venice, into which every charge would be poured for the satisfaction of every private vengeance."

"I should like to see Federation," he said. "I will go one step further and say I should like to see you reunited in one great Parliament of an Imperial race. But undue hurry would be fatal. Now is the time for discussion. Nothing would please me better than to know that Federation would come within the lifetime of this generation. I make a last appeal. I have come to South Africa at some inconvenience to myself. I have no personal motives and no political ambition to gratify. I am older than most of those present, and my time of active service is necessarily coming to a close. I have tried to fulfil my great misson in an impartial spirit. I have spoken frankly and without reserve. I shall go away hopeful and confident regarding the rest of South Africa, and I am sanguine even here. Upon you a great responsibility lies. You are engaged in building up a new nation. What that nation shall be depends largely upon what you do now, not on the past. You have a clean slate, and I ask you to give up all kinds of animosity which can prevent co-operation for the common good, and also for that Imperial dominion which is yours as well as ours." At a banquet given on 24th February, which was attended by the leading Dutch politicians, he dwelt on the same theme, but added the intimation that a large measure of clemency might shortly be extended to the Rebels. But it must be accepted as an act of grace, not a concession to pressure.

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The other side of the case was also presented to Mr Chamberlain by a deputation of Dutch Loyalists, introduced by Sir Henry Juta. He proffered a "living mass of proof." Because a lot of men remained loyal, it was no sign of improvement. Ostracism was too real to admit of doubt. He had direct proof that the opinon was gaining ground that once more the Loyalists were going to be deserted. They were in a worse position as regards compensation, because they had been driven from their homes without obtaining receipts during the War, whereas the disloyal were undisturbed. The Government had not redeemed its promise to put the Loyalists on an equal footing with the pro-Boers in the matter of the return of arms. The Memorial also gave examples of persecution in the churches and schools, and threw doubts on Mr De Waal's protestations of loyalty.

Mr Chamberlain, in reply, said he was sorry to hear so unsatisfactory an account of the situation. While he advocated conciliation, he did not ask that it should be purchased at the sacrifice of conviction, or by the desertion of friends. One could not legislate against an insidious form of persecution; one could only endeavour to remove the poisonous atmosphere which makes such a condition possible. He would advise them not to lose heart, and to stand firm in loyalty to the Government, and firm to one another. They should wait for the process of compensation to be complete before they believed themselves left in the cold. As regards the "first invasion" losses, there was a clear distinction between those who were loyal and those who actually took part in the rebellion. The compensation would be on a generous scale to the loyal, but there would be

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none for the rebels. The "second invasion" losses were a matter entirely for the Self-Governing Colony. The Acts of Parliament draw a clear distinction in favour of Loyalists. The money at the disposal of the Commission was not more than sufficient to meet the claims of the Loyalists, and, therefore, the rebels would have nothing.

Mr De Waal's speech was a distinct reprobation of ostracism. After the even more striking declaration by Mr Hofmeyr, it was not good policy or generous to accept these assurances in a grudging spirit; if the Loyalists were sincere in their desire to forget the past, they must put suspicion aside. "You want to see proofs. So do I. We must both wait." Mr Chamberlain said he did not believe that there was any difference of opinion as to the importance of a Dissolution. The existing situation was confessedly anomalous. He was assured that a Dissolution was impossible till a late period in the year. As soon as registration was complete, and the forms of the Constitution permitted, a new Parliament would speak authoritatively the opinion of the Colony. He could hold out no hope of interference by the Imperial authorities. It would be unconstitutional, and rake up old animosities.

That there was some truth in the statements of the Dutch Loyalists and some justice in their demands was as clear as that the former were exaggerated and the latter excessive. It was Mr Chamberlain's business to hold, so far as possible, an even balance between the extremists on both sides; and the feat, difficult as it was, he seems, by general admission, to have successfully performed.

On the evening of the 25th he bade farewell to Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, and started on the

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homeward voyage in the *Norman Castle*. Mr and Mrs Chamberlain arrived at Southampton on 14th March, where they were welcomed by a deputation from the Colonial Secretary's constituents in West Birmingham. "I am very glad," said Mr Chamberlain in reply, "that you have mentioned my wife in your Address, for her companionship and help have been of the greatest help to me. I do not know how I should have got through my work without her assistance and co-operation." To the Mayor and Corporation of Southampton he declared that he returned in a spirit of hopefulness, even of confidence, though they must not over-rate the results already achieved by his mission.

His arrival in London, though intended to be private, was made the occasion of a popular demonstration, and on the next day he was summoned by the King to Buckingham Palace. On the following Saturday (20th March) he was received at the Guildhall, and entertained at a public luncheon by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House. After a general review of his work in South Africa, and of the views he had formed and the prospects he entertained, he pointed out that the Imperial idea had only recently taken root in this country:—

"We have only to look back in the lifetime of many of us to remember a period of apathy and indifference in which our Statesmen were eager chiefly to rid themselves of responsibility, and felt that home affairs were as much as they could properly be called upon to attempt. At that time our Colonies were crying in vain for our sympathy. And now we have gone ahead; now, I think, perhaps, we are even in advance of our Colonies. Not, indeed, that there is on their part—as I have

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had sufficient testimony—any indifference to the common interest, or any want of feeling or affection, but that their own local affairs have become so important and absorbing that, perhaps, they have failed to appreciate adequately all that is due from them as members of the Empire to which they are proud to belong."

It is too soon to form an opinion on the progress of pacification in South Africa. The machinery of Government has been working smoothly enough, but that may only be because the Imperial authorities have an assured majority in the Councils. Some disappointment has been expressed because General Botha and other recognised Boer Leaders would not co-operate in the Administration. But if they had associated themselves with the British so closely, and so soon after the War, they would have been called traitors by their own people. It was, however, unfortunate that General Botha, who had been one of the Moderate Party in the old Raad at Pretoria, should, as Mr Chamberlain said in the House of Commons on 30th July, put himself forward as a leader of the Irreconcilables. The letter which he had sent to Mr Leonard Courtney for publication in England was, no doubt, a mischievous document, because it dwelt only on the shortcomings of the Government of the Colony, and made no allowance for difficulties, while it did not give a faithful record of the mere facts. But neither this misleading document nor the speech which he delivered at the great Boer meeting at Heidelburg, on 2nd July, contained anything absolutely disloyal. There was no sentence in either that could be construed as even a veiled incitement to sedition —nothing which passed the licence claimed in

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this country by an Opposition orator in dealing with the Cabinet of the day. That such criticism could be tolerated, and that no evil results have ensued, is the best evidence that the country is settling down, and that racial animosity in the new Colonies is certainly not more dangerous than at the Cape. Indeed, General Botha admitted that the misgovernment of which he complained pressed as hardly on the British as on the Boers: "You must not infer," he wrote, "that the Boers are seething with discontent. There is a wonderful calm everywhere observable." All their energies were engaged, he added, in rebuilding their homes and repairing the losses of the war. In his speech, made nearly three weeks later, he declared that the Boers were not going against the Government. They wished to stand shoulder to shoulder with it, and help it through any trouble in the country. But they wanted "these big questions" — Amnesty for Rebels, more of the Dutch language in the schools, the admission of the Asiatic labour, the Black Vote, and the War Debt—to be settled by Boer opinion, and with Boer approval.

In opposition to the old maxim, *Divide et impera*, the British have set themselves to mitigate sectional jealousies and racial feuds by working gradually towards the Federation of the various Colonies. The first step in this direction was taken by the Bloemfontein Conference, convened for the purpose of establishing a Customs Union. A further development of the Movement is the Order in Council forming an Inter-Colonial Council for the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. The object was thus explained by Lord Milner:—

"The important work before the Legislatures

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of both Colonies is great. Indeed, in the case of the Transvaal it might almost be said to be appalling. They will both be better able to cope adequately with the enormous amount of work before them, if they are not called upon to deal, in addition, with the matters which it is now proposed to reserve for an Inter-Colonial Council. . . . The Council, which is constituted by the enclosed draft, would be one of high authority, representing, as it would, the Executive and Legislative Councils of each of the two Colonies concerned. It could not be open to the charge of being unrepresentative, and its influence would be such that neither of the local Legislatures would be likely to cavil at its decisions, which they would in any case be unable to alter."

As regards the policy of the proposed Measure, Lord Milner added that the more he considered it the more convinced he was of its desirability and importance. "I see great possibilities of development in it, affecting much more than the two Colonies. So far, the policy of linking the two Colonies more closely together in regard to their common interests has proved the greatest possible success. I could not have believed six weeks ago that we should have got through the numerous difficult and conflicting questions which presented themselves to the Railway Extension Conference, and subsequently to the Bloemfontein Conference, as smoothly and satisfactorily as we have done. The result is largely, if not entirely, due to the fact that at the former Conference we eliminated the idea of any conflicting interest between the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony in railway matters, and thereby we succeeded at the latter Conference in getting the two Colonies to work absolutely as one. Though

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six months ago no one dreamt of unifying the two Colonies in any respect, now that the thing has been done, or rather started, the advantages are so obvious that apparently no one is seriously opposed to it, while the great body of public opinion seems cordially in favour of it. No doubt the position would be very different if any attempt were made to amalgamate the two Colonies altogether. . . . In the proposed Constitution, all matters into which local sentiment and tradition enter, and in which diversity of action would be harmless, and perhaps even useful, are left to the Local Governments. I would only say, in conclusion, that the basis on which I propose that any contribution to the Common Budget should be levied, and also the basis on which it is suggested that any surplus should be divided, though they may appear somewhat arbitrary, have really been carefully thought out, and discussed with good financial authorities. The Customs duties, especially when the Customs Union is introduced, will be the best measure (a better measure than the sum of taxation) of the comparative resources of the two Colonies; and, therefore, of their comparative ability to contribute towards the common burden."

On 23rd May, Mr Chamberlain transmitted to Lord Milner an Order in Council establishing the new Council founded on the draft of the High Commissioner. Mr Chamberlain added: "In view of the considerations advanced in your Despatch of 16th February, the present Measure is to be regarded as a financial necessity for securing efficient control and harmonious administration in regard to certain matters of common interest, whilst leaving to the two Colonies perfect freedom as to their individual

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necessities and aspirations. It is mainly by these considerations that I have been actuated in submitting the Measure for the approval of His Majesty in Council; but, judging from the spirit which prevailed at the recent Customs and Railway Conferences, I am led to believe that it will also be welcomed as a step towards the closer union of British South Africa."

The Order was brought into force in both Colonies on 15th June.

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CHAPTER XIX

STEPS TOWARDS FEDERATION

EARLY in 1897, Mr Chamberlain took advantage of the approaching celebration of the late Queen's second Jubilee to invite the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies to attend a Conference in Downing Street.* The proceedings, as he explained in his opening speech on 24th June, were to be of a somewhat informal nature, *i.e.*, the Resolutions arrived at were not to be binding on any of the communities represented, and it was the desire of the Colonial Office rather to elicit expressions of opinion from the visitors than to

* This was by no means the first occasion on which the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies had assembled. But the first important meeting was convened in London under the auspices of the Imperial Federation League. It was addressed by Lord Salisbury who pointed out the difficulties interposed in the way of a Customs Union by the different fiscal policies of the various parts of the Empire, but regarded such an arrangement in the future as by no means impossible. The first business, however, was union for defence. Mr Chamberlain, speaking of the Conference after it had been dissolved, expressed his belief that the existing tie between Mother Country and Colonies was essentially a temporary one; it must be strengthened by Federation or it would be loosened altogether. Ten points were set down for discussion, and, practically, they covered the whole ground of Imperial Federation. Subsequently,

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put forward any views or proposals of its own. The subjects proposed for consideration were: (1) The Political Relations between the Mother Country and the Self-governing Colonies; (2) Imperial Defence; (3) Commercial Relations; (4) The construction of a Pacific Cable passing through exclusively British territory; and a number of minor questions, which included the establishment of an Imperial Penny Postage, and imposing restrictions on Alien Immigration.

With regard to establishing a closer political connection between the Mother Country and the Colonies, Mr Chamberlain declared that here, at least, the idea of an Imperial Federation was "in the air," but he plainly intimated that Colonial opinion, so far as he could tell, was not yet ripe for any practical proposals in that direction. If it was ever to be accomplished, it would be after the lapse of a considerable time, and only by gradual steps. One of the surest advances towards that end would consist in the grouping of the Colonies. Canada had shown the way, Australia was following, and in South Africa the idea had

however, the movement languished, but it was revived in 1894 at the Ottawa Conference, at which three Resolutions were passed (1) in support of a Customs Arrangement between Great Britain and the Colonies under which trade within the Empire might be placed on a more favourable footing than that on which trade is carried on with foreign countries; (2) that until this could be settled Great Britain and the Colonies should place each other's products on a more favoured basis than those of foreign countries, and (3) that all clauses in existing Treaties which prevented the Colonies from making arrangement for reciprocity between themselves or with Great Britain should be removed, and power should be given to the Colonies for making such agreements. But nothing was done in pursuance of these suggestions until the Conference of 1897, as Germany and Belgium both declined to modify the existing Treaties.

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bulked largely in the past, and would probably come to the front again. There was, however, one suggestion—merely a personal one—which Mr Chamberlain wished to place before the Premiers. This was for setting up some "better machinery of consultation" between the Mother Country and the Self-Governing Colonies. It might be possible to establish "a great Council of the Empire" to which they would send representative plenipotentiaries, not mere delegates unable to act without reference to their respective Governments, but "persons who by their position in the Colonies, and by their close touch with Colonial feeling, would be able, upon all subjects submitted to them, to give really effective and valuable advice." If such a Council were to be created, it would at once assume immense importance, and might develop into something still greater; indeed, it might grow into a Federal Council. The opinion of such a body would be taken by the Legislatures of the Mother Country and the Colonies alike, and would weigh most materially, on "all minor matters of common interest."

"There is," Mr Chamberlain proceeded, "only one point in reference to this which it is absolutely necessary that we all should bear in mind. It may be that the time has come—and, if not, I believe it will come—when the Colonies will desire to substitute, for the slight relationship which at present exists, a true partnership, and in that case they will want their share in the management of the Empire—which we like to think is as much theirs as it is ours. But, of course, with the privilege of management and of control, will also come the obligation and the responsibility. There will come some form of

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contribution towards the expense for objects which we shall have in common."

This was the difficulty which led to the temporary failure of the scheme. The majority of the Premiers were not prepared to recommend any proportionate contribution in aid of Imperial expenditure—at least for the present, though Mr Seddon (New Zealand) and Sir E. N. C. Braddon (Tasmania) thought that the time had already come for strengthening the ties between the United Kingdom and the Colonies. The other Premiers, or most of them, agreed that the present relations could not continue indefinitely, and that some means must be devised for giving the Colonies a voice and control in matters of Imperial interest. But as this would involve the voting of Colonial money, the whole matter must be postponed, and the idea of any radical reform was shelved by the collective declaration that "the present relations between the United Kingdom and the Self-governing Colonies are generally satisfactory under the existing condition of things."

On the question of Imperial Defence, Mr Chamberlain pointed out that the Army and Navy were being maintained, "not exclusively or even mainly," for the benefit of the United Kingdom. During the reign of Queen Victoria, it would be found that every War, great or small, in which we had been engaged, "had at the bottom a Colonial interest—the interest of a Colony or a great Dependency like India." If we had no Empire it would not be necessary to spend anything like what we were spending either on the Army or Navy. Here Mr Chamberlain adverted gently to the position which the Colonies would occupy if they were separated from Great Britain.

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Canada had 3000 miles of frontier exposed to a powerful neighbour, and might be brought into conflict with the rising power of Japan or even with the great Russian Empire. The interests of Australia had been threatened on more than one occasion by the two greatest military nations of Europe, each the possessor of a powerful fleet. In South Africa the British settlers were confronted with domestic rivals, heavily armed and prepared both for offence and defence—not to mention the ambitions of Foreign Powers.

"What" (Mr Chamberlain said) "I want to urge upon you is—and in doing so I think I am speaking to those who are already converted—that we have a common interest in this matter, and certainly it has been a great pleasure to us, a great pride to us, that Australia, in the first instance, offered voluntarily a contribution in aid of the British Navy, besides taking her full share of her own military defences. Now we have to recognise that the Cape Colony has followed in that patriotic course. I do not know upon what conditions these gifts may be offered or continued, but, at all events, the spirit in which they have been made is most heartily reciprocated in this country. The amount, of course, is at the present time absolutely trifling, but that is not the point. We are looking to the Colonies as still children, but rapidly approaching manhood. In the lifetime, perhaps, of some of us we shall see the population doubled, and certainly in the lifetime of our descendants there will be great nations where now there are comparatively sparse populations; and to establish in the early days this principle of mutual support, and of a truly Imperial patriotism, is a great thing of which our Colonial Statesmen may well be proud."

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Now, though a committee of experts had done something for Colonial Defence, the military preparations were still behindhand. If War broke out it would be sudden: there would be no time then for preparation. We ought to have beforehand a common scheme of defence against any possible or, at least, any probable enemy. Some of the Colonies had already presented schemes—others had not done so. Mr Chamberlain believed—with more justification than, perhaps, he knew—that it was "most desirable that this omission should be repaired."

After dwelling on the necessity of uniformity in arms and equipment, the provision of central stores, and the military training of the local forces, he said he was looking forward to something much greater than the interchangeability of the several groups of Colonial contingents. He would unify, to some extent, the whole military strength of the Empire:—

"That is a matter which also can be arranged, and to which we shall bring, at all events, the utmost good will. If you have, as Canada has at Kingston, an important Military College, it may be possible for us to offer occasionally, to the cadets of that College, commissions in the British Army. But a still more important matter which has suggested itself to my mind, and which now I desire to commend to your earnest attention, is a proposal which may be described as the interchangeability of military duties. To put it into plain English it means this: that, for instance, a Canadian regiment should come to this country, take up its quarters for a period of time, at least twelve months, with the British Army, and form, during the whole time that it is in this country, a part of the British Army, and that in return a similar

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regiment of British troops, or a brigade of artillery or cavalry, should go to Canada and should reside and exercise with the Canadian Army, and form a part of that Army. The idea is that this should be chiefly for the purpose of drill and instruction, and I cannot doubt that it will be of enormous advantage to the Canadian troops, and to the troops of the Colonies, to measure themselves against the Regular Army, and to learn the discipline and the manœuvres which are practised on a large scale in this country.

"But my imagination goes even further. It seems to me possible that, although in the first instance the idea is that such a regiment coming to this country would come solely for that purpose, and would not be engaged in military operations, yet, if it were their wish to share in the dangers and the glories of the British Army, and take their part in expeditions in which the British Army might be engaged, I see no reason why these Colonial troops should not, from time to time, fight side by side with their British colleagues. That, however, is a matter which, like everything else which I am putting before you, is not a recommendation which has any pressure behind it; it is merely a suggestion to be taken up by you voluntarily, if it commend itself to your minds. What I have suggested might take place with regard to Canada, I believe, might equally take place with regard to such fine forces as those of which we have seen representatives from some of the Colonies of Australia, and might take place also with regard to the South African Colonies."

On the military question, practically nothing was done by the Premiers: they listened to a statement from Captain Nathan, Secretary of the Colonial Defence Committee, and promised to refer

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the suggestions they had heard to their respective Governments. In a general way they approved the proposal for an occasional exchange of military units, and were informed that the War Office would make an offer for the exchange (or conversion) of the Martini-Henry rifles for those of smaller calibre employed in the Imperial forces.

But a more definite understanding was needed as to naval matters. The First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr Goschen) removed a misunderstanding which had gained currency as to the wishes of Whitehall. The Government highly valued the principle of a Colonial contribution to the Navy, though the present amount was "inconsiderable."

"From the strategical point of view," said Mr Goschen, "we should be glad that the Admiralty should have a free hand. I was glad to see that it has been acknowledged by the Premiers that the operations of the Australian squadron in the Solomon Islands, and generally in the Pacific groups, have a distinct Colonial as well as an Imperial interest, and that no complaint could be raised against the employment of ships on the Australasian station for purposes so distinctly Colonial as many of these purposes are, though such employment might carry the ships to a considerable distance from the Continent of Australia. But, apart from this, the object for which we want a free hand is to be able to conduct the defence of Australia on the same principles as those which we should follow in the defence of our English, Scotch, and Irish ports, principles which exclude our undertaking to detach ships to particular ports. For instance, we could not undertake to post one ship at Sydney, another at Adelaide, and another at Melbourne. We must rely upon the localities

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themselves for the defence of these ports, while, on our part, we undertake that no organised Expedition should be directed against any part of Australia. No organised Expedition could be sent either from Japan, or from the United States, or from France, without the full knowledge of the Admiralty. That I assume. We are too ubiquitous for any such Expedition to be secretly organised. If it were organised, our whole strength would be directed to defeating such a movement. I see it has been suggested in a previous discussion that possibly we might, under stress, take away the ships which may be on the Australian Station, and for which you have partly paid and on which you rely, in order to send them to some distant quarter. But I cannot conceive any case, unless we lost actually our sea power, when we should think it our duty not to defend so valuable a portion of our Empire as Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, for the safety of which we hold ourselves responsible in the same way as we hold ourselves responsible for the safety of the British Islands. I put this very strongly, so that there may be no apprehension. In all our strategical combinations we have never conceived the possibility that we should expose such Possessions as the Australian Colonies."

The "misunderstanding" had arisen from a speech in which the Duke of Devonshire had protested against the policy of "hugging the shore." The proper tactics for the Navy were aggressive; hunting down the enemy's ships and attacking his Possessions—by Australian vessels, *e.g.*, being directed against his ships and Possessions within the Australian zone. "Hence"—Mr Goschen continued—"the duty of the Colonies to look after their shore de-

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fences. I do not say that we should not prefer contributions without any tie whatever, but I do not make such a demand, and, so far as the policy of the present Board of Admiralty is concerned, I am prepared to stand by the existing Agreement." It is not difficult to read between the lines. Mr Goschen was, in fact, arguing against the restrictions imposed by the Australian Colonies; and the "misunderstanding" which he desired to remove was a direct disagreement as to policy. His "explanation," however, was, politely but decidedly, set aside by the Premiers, who resolved "that the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty with reference to the Australian Squadron is most satisfactory"—indeed, it conceded the point in issue—and "the Premiers favour the continuance of the Australian Squadron under the terms of the existing agreement." More encouraging was the announcement, by the Premier of Cape Colony, that his Legislature was prepared to offer an "unconditional contribution of the cost of a first-class battleship."

In approaching the commercial relations between the United Kingdom and the Colonies, Mr Chamberlain was well aware that he was treading on doubtful ground. He began with a cautious reference to the German Zollverein, which had commenced entirely as a commercial convention, dealing at first only partially with the trade of the Empire, but was afterwards extended to the whole of that trade, and finally "made possible and encouraged the ultimate union of the Empire." But, before anything practical could be done, Mr Chamberlain reminded the Premiers that Great Britain would have to disentangle herself from various Treaty obligations—notably

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those with Germany and Belgium. To denounce our Treaties with these Powers would be a serious affair, since our trade with these two alone was larger than with all the Colonies combined. The question, however, was about to be brought to an issue by the Canadian offer to extend Preferential terms to the Mother Country; already Germany and Belgium had protested and claimed similar terms, as the Treaties still in force bound the Colonies as well as Great Britain. Did the Colonies desire that an end should be put to those Treaties? If the answer should be in the affirmative, the request would be earnestly considered by the Imperial Government.

This was the official way of saying that Mr Chamberlain would bring their demand before his colleagues, and do his best to get it conceded. There was no hesitation in the response of the Premiers, and Mr Chamberlain was as good as his word. Notwithstanding the criticism which was certain to be directed—and, in fact, was afterwards directed—against any action in favour of Preferential arrangements within the Empire, as being inconsistent with the accepted interpretation of Free Trade doctrine, the Foreign Office at once gave notice to terminate the Commercial Treaties with Germany and Belgium. This took effect from 30th July 1898.

As the Premiers had further resolved to confer with their respective Cabinets on the possibility of improving trade relations with the United Kingdom by giving a Preference to its products, Mr Chamberlain pointed out that such an offer must be confined to the Mother Country *nominatim*, and not made to any foreign country. Otherwise, under the "most-favoured-nation" clause, which exists in most of our Commercial

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Treaties, other foreign countries would be entitled to claim a similar advantage.

Other matters discussed were the Treaties between the British Government and Japan and as to Tunisian trade with the French Government (to both of which most of the Colonial representatives declined to adhere); the restrictions upon the immigration of coloured persons (as to which nothing more definite than an exchange of views took place); the establishment of an Imperial Penny Post (which was rejected by all the Premiers except those of Cape Colony and Natal); and the construction of a Pacific Cable through British territory (which was postponed). On the other hand, the Premiers passed a Resolution declaring that the time had arrived when all restrictions that prevent the investment of Trust Funds in Colonial Stocks should be removed. This request Mr Chamberlain promised to consider, and, at his instance, no doubt, the Colonial Stocks Act was passed—not without opposition from certain financial experts who believed that some of the Colonies had been decidedly improvident in piling up their indebtedness beyond their probable means of repayment.

It will be seen that, in this first Conference with the Premiers, Mr Chamberlain handled them very gently, and that on almost every point they gained their own way. Yet the meeting was by no means a failure; there was a general feeling that something had been done to bring about a closer understanding between Imperial and Colonial Statesmanship, and to remove the impression that Downing Street was careless of Colonial opinion, and ignorant of the difficulties with which Australian and other politicians have to deal. Nor was there any hesitation as to the

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advisability of convoking similar Conferences in the future.

Though Mr Chamberlain's second Conference with the Colonial Premiers (June to August 1902) was interrupted by a somewhat serious cab accident in Whitehall—just by the "Canadian Arch"—which confined him to the house for several weeks, it was more fruitful than the first in direct and practical results. Between 1897 and 1902 many things had happened to foster the growing sentiment of a common patriotism within the Empire—the reverses, the anxieties, and the successful conclusion of the War in South Africa; the general mourning on the death of Queen Victoria, and the painful suspense which attended the Coronation of King Edward; the Federation of the Australian Colonies; the Canadian experiment in a Preferential policy towards the United Kingdom; last, but not least, the daily insults and mendacious accusations which had been levelled by the Press of nearly every country in Europe against the Statesmen and Soldiers of the Empire, and which were even more warmly resented by the Colonials than by Englishmen, It was, therefore, in a more accommodating temper, and with a stronger sense of Imperial Unity, that the representatives of the Self-Governing Colonies met the spokesman of the Imperial Government in 1902.*

In the first place, it was decided to raise these

*It must be borne in mind that official account of the Conference does not profess to be complete. It was settled at the outset that the discussions, if they were to be free, must also be confidential, and only such reports as were agreed upon should be published. The suggestion, made at the instance of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, that the verbatim note should be issued has recently been negatived by Canada, Newfoundland, and (partially) by New Zealand.

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Conferences to the rank of a recognised institution, and it was resolved that "it would be to the advantage of the Empire if triennial Conferences were held, at which questions affecting the political and commercial relations of the Mother Country and His Majesty's Dominions over the Seas could be discussed and considered, as between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies. In case of any emergency arising upon which a special Conference may have been deemed necessary, the next ordinary Conference to be held not sooner than three years thereafter."

Another Resolution, of more doubtful policy, though expressed in guarded terms, was that "so far as might be consistent with the confidential negotiation of Treaties with Foreign Powers," the views of the Colonies affected should be obtained, in order that they might be in a "better position to give adhesion to such Treaties." It may be found practicable, in regard to commercial arrangements with foreign countries, to act on this informal understanding, and it was, no doubt, this class of negotiations which the Colonial Premiers had chiefly in view. We have seen already how jealous they are of every Imperial undertaking which may, directly or indirectly, affect their fiscal policy. Nor is their attitude in this respect unreasonable, since in most of the Colonies the balance between Revenue and Expenditure is a matter of somewhat nice adjustment. But, obviously, in questions of high policy, it will be impossible for the Foreign Minister in London to wait for mailed Despatches, carrying the possibly divergent opinions of Statesmen in every quarter of the world; and to tele-

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graph elaborate arguments, even in the most ingenious cipher, would often be to give away what should be a carefully preserved secret. In this respect the Colonies—unless a Standing Council of the Empire is ever established—must, it is clear, be content with no more privileged position than that occupied by the Imperial Parliament; they must submit to the same restrictions, and repose the same confidence in the Imperial Ministers of the day, as our own Parliament concedes to the judgment of the Imperial Government. Indeed, it has grown up to be a custom to exclude all but a very few members of the Cabinet from any knowledge of Diplomatic transactions until the object has been attained. It is on these terms only that we can have dealings with European Chancelleries. Imagine Lord Lansdowne conducting a discussion with Count Lamsdorff or Herr von Bülow, and having to obtain, as he went on, the concurrent approval of Sir Edmund Barton, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and Mr Seddon! By comparison, the Concert of Europe would run on wheels. Nevertheless, it was excusable that the principle of Colonial participation should thus be asserted—on condition that the application should be left to the discretion of the Imperial Government. "If you want our aid," Sir Wilfrid Laurier has said, "call us to your Councils."

"We do require your assistance," said Mr Chamberlain in his opening address, "in the administration of the vast Empire which is yours as well as ours. The weary Titan staggers under the too vast orb of its fate. We have borne the burden for many years. We think it is time that our children should assist us to support it, and, whenever you make the request to us, be very

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sure that we shall hasten gladly to call you to our Councils. If you are prepared at any time to take any share, any proportionate share, in the burdens of the Empire, we are prepared to meet you with any proposal for giving to you a corresponding voice in the policy of the Empire. And the object, if I may point out to you, may be achieved in various ways. Suggestions have been made that representation should be given to the Colonies in either, or in both, Houses of Parliament. There is no objection in principle to any such proposal. If it comes to us, it is a proposal which His Majesty's Government would certainly feel justified in favourably considering; but I have always felt myself that the most practical form in which we could achieve our object would be the establishment or the creation of a real Council of the Empire to which all questions of Imperial interest might be referred; and if it were desired to proceed gradually, as probably would be our course—we are all accustomed to the slow ways in which our Constitutions have been worked out—if it be desired to proceed gradually, the Council might in the first instance be merely an Advisory Council. It would resemble, in some respects, the Advisory Council which was established in Australia, and which, although it was not wholly successful, did nevertheless pave the way for the complete Federation upon which we now congratulate them. But although that would be a preliminary step, it is clear that the object would not be completely secured until there had been conferred upon such a Council executive functions, and perhaps also legislative powers, and it is for you to say, gentlemen, whether you think the time has come when any progress whatever can be made in this direction."

Dealing with Imperial Defence, Mr Chamber-

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lain pointed out that the Naval and Military Expenditure in the United Kingdom worked out at £1. 9s. 3d. per head per annum; in Canada, at 2s.; in New South Wales, 3s. 5d.; in Victoria, 3s. 3d.; in New Zealand, 3s. 4d.; in the Cape and Natal, between 2s. and 3s. On this point, happily, the Premiers were able to notify an important advance of Colonial opinion. The Australian Commonwealth and New Zealand agreed to raise their contribution from £126,000 to £240,000 a year (£200,000 and £40,000 respectively), for an improved Australasian squadron and the establishment of a branch of the Royal Naval Reserve; the Cape Colony gave £50,000 and Natal £35,000 a year, as an unconditional contribution to the maintenance of the Royal Navy, and Newfoundland undertook to pay £3000 a year towards the branch of the Royal Naval Reserve hitherto maintained there from Imperial funds. The Memorandum presented by Sir John Forrest, the Australian Commonwealth Minister of Defence, was in some respects a very remarkable and enlightened document. (Needless to add, it has already brought him into trouble at home with the advocates of an exclusively Australian patriotism.) Having shown that the establishment of even a small Australian Navy—two first-class and six second-class cruisers—would cost about £3,600,000 in capital outlay, and involve a yearly expenditure of £1,000,000, he added that such a force "would not be able to meet on equal terms the powerful cruisers with highly-trained crews that would be certain to be used against us." Besides the enormous cost of replacing obsolete with modern ships, there would be no change for the officers and crews. They would go on from year to year

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in the same ships, "subject to the same influences, and, I fear, 'deteriorating effects.'" He ended by proposing that there should be one Navy for the whole Empire, each part contributing on some ratio to be settled hereafter—possibly on that of comparative trade. "I cannot think that for Canada and Australia to each have a few war-ships, and the Cape and New Zealand a few also, is a plan suited to the Empire." But to establish an Imperial Navy, it would be necessary for the contributory States to be represented at the Admiralty. This, Sir John thought, could be arranged without difficulty. Perhaps the task would not be quite so simple as he suggested, but there is no denying that "in time of War there could not be any division of responsibility, and until a more extended Federation of the Empire is established, responsibility must rest with the Imperial Government."

The Dominion Government held aloof from the naval policy of the other Colonies, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier stated that it was in contemplation to set up a local naval force in the waters of Canada. The objection of the Dominion to co-operating in a general scheme arose, not from the expense involved, but because it would be "an important departure from the principle of Colonial Self-Government." Nevertheless, the Canadian Ministers were, they stated in a formal Memorandum, fully conscious that the Dominion, as it advanced in population and wealth, would be bound to make "more liberal outlay for those necessary provisions of self-defence which every country has to assume and bear." They pointed also to the annual outlay on the Militia system of Canada ($2,000,000), and the efficiency of that Service had been proved in South Africa. Though

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the expenditure for defence was at present limited to the military side, the Government were also prepared to consider the naval side. On the sea-coast of Canada there were a large number of men admirably qualified to form a Naval Reserve. Ministers were hopeful of being able to relieve the taxpayer in the Mother Country of some part of his burden, and had the strongest desire to carry out their Defence schemes in co-operation with the Imperial authorities, and under the advice of experienced Imperial officers, so far as this was consistent with the principle of local Self-Government, which had proved so great a factor in the promotion of Imperial Unity.

On the question of Military Defence, nothing was decided at the Conference, though an interesting discussion was commenced by Mr Brodrick, Secretary of State for War, on Mr Seddon's motion for the creation of "an Imperial Reserve Force, formed in each of His Majesty's dominions over the seas, for service in case of emergency outside the Dominion or Colony in which such Reserve is formed. The limits within which such Reserve force may be employed outside the Colony wherein it is raised to be defined by the Imperial and Colonial Governments at the time such Reserve is formed, and to be in accordance with any law in force for the time being respecting the same. The cost of maintaining and equipping such Imperial Reserve Force to be defrayed in such proportion and manner as may be agreed upon between the Imperial and Colonial Governments."

The representatives of Cape Colony and Natal favoured this proposal, but those of Canada and Australia were of opinion that "the best course to pursue was to endeavour to raise the standard of training for the general body of

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their forces, to organise the departmental services and equipment required for the mobilisation of a field force, leaving it to the Colony, when the need arose, to determine how and to what extent it should render assistance. The Imperial sentiment in the Colonies was steadily growing, and their action in the late War left no room for doubt that such assistance would be given readily and effectively, and to the utmost of their ability, in any future emergency. To establish a special force, set apart for general Imperial service, and practically under the absolute control of the Imperial Government, was objectionable in principle, as derogating from the powers of Self-Government enjoyed by them, and would be calculated to impede the general improvement in training and organisation of their defence forces, and, consequently, their ability to render effective help, if it should be required."

It was settled, therefore, that if the Imperial Government wished to press Mr Brodrick's scheme further in the case of those Colonies that regarded it favourably, it would be best to do so through "the usual channel of official correspondence." That is to say, the Conference washed its hands of the question.

Some progress was made—though nothing was definitely settled—under what had appeared to be the least practicable head of the Conference Agenda. Mr Chamberlain, in his opening remarks on Commercial Relations within the Empire, had done little more than invite full and free discussion. "We rule nothing out of order." Having pointed out that the Empire could be self-sustaining, and could provide itself within its own limits with every necessity and almost every luxury, he showed, on the other hand, that the Empire

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did, as a matter of fact, draw the greatest part of its supplies from outside, and exported the bulk of its surplus produce to foreign countries. All this trade might be trade within the Empire. But how could the interchange of commodities between different parts of the Empire be promoted by Statesmanship?

"Our first object, then, as I say, is Free Trade within the Empire. We feel confident—we think that it is a matter which demands no evidence or proof—that if such a result were feasible it would enormously increase our Inter-imperial trade; that it would hasten the development of our Colonies; that it would fill up the spare places in your lands with an active, intelligent, industrious, and, above all, a British, population; that it would make the Mother Country entirely independent of foreign food and raw material. But when I speak of Free Trade it must be understood that I do not mean by that the total abolition of Customs Duties as between different parts of the Empire. I recognise fully the exigencies of all new countries, and especially of our Self-Governing Colonies. I see that your Revenue must always, probably, and certainly for a long while to come, depend chiefly upon indirect taxation. Even if public opinion were to justify you in levying direct taxation, the cost of collecting it in countries sparsely populated might be so large as to make it impossible. But in my mind, whenever Customs duties are balanced by Excise duties, or whenever they are levied on articles which are not produced at home, the enforcement of such Duties is no derogation whatever from the principles of Free Trade as I understand it. If, then, even with this limitation, which is a very important one, which would leave it open to all Colonies to collect their Revenues by

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Customs Duties and indirect taxation, even if the proposal were accepted with that limitation, I think it would be impossible to over-estimate the mutual advantage which would be derived from it, the stimulus to our common trade, and the binding force of such a link which such a trade would certainly create."

Up to that time, however, no adequate proposal had been made by any of the Colonies, though in the 1897 Conference the Premiers had undertaken to consider whether a Preference might not be given to imports from the United Kingdom (without any reciprocal obligation) since it was the best and most open market in the world for all the products of the Colonies. The failure to act on this Resolution Mr Chamberlain attributed partly to the Federation of Australia, partly to the South African War. Canada, however, had in 1898 given a Preference of 25 per cent., which was in 1900 increased to 33⅓ per cent. It had, therefore, anticipated the general proposal of the Colonial Premiers, and, valuable as the action of the Dominion had been as a proof of goodwill to the Mother Country, the commercial results had been "altogether disappointing" on a comparison of the import trade of British goods into Canada in the year 1896-97 with that in 1900-01. The total imports of Canada increased £14,500,000 —*i.e.*, at the rate of 62 per cent. The part on which no Duty was levied—and in which, therefore, no Preference was given to British goods—increased £6,250,000, *i.e.*, at 67 per cent. The general trade from foreign countries, which came under the general tariff, also increased £6,250,000 —*i.e.*, at 62 per cent. But the Preferential trade had only increased £2,000,000—*i.e.*, 55 per cent. That is to say, the rate of increase under the

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Preferential tariff was actually less than under the general tariff and also under the free tariff. Again, the total increase of trade with foreign countries was 69 per cent., but with the United Kingdom only 48.

Now what was the cause of this? "Up to 1885 British exports steadily increased to the Dominion of Canada. Then the Government of that day adopted a very severe Protective tariff which, by the nature of things, perhaps specially affected British goods. We are not the exporters, as a rule, of raw materials, or of food. We, therefore, do not export the articles which Canada freely imports. We export manufactured goods, and it was against manufactured goods that the tariff was intentionally, I suppose, directed. The result of that was, that there immediately set in a continuous and rapid decline in the importation of British goods into Canada. Now, the Preference which was given in 1897 has checked the decline, but there is very little increase. Practically, the checking of that decline is the whole result which we can recognise as having followed the generous intentions of the Canadian Government. Foreign produce at the present time in Canada has still a lower average tariff than British produce, no doubt due to the fact that the foreign produce is, as I have said, as a rule, of a character upon which lower Duties are ordinarily levied; but the result is, that while foreign imports have largely increased, the British imports have largely decreased. But now I want to point out another thing which I think will be of great importance, and which, I am sure, the Government of Canada must have taken into their serious consideration. What return has been made to them by the foreigner for the advantage which the foreigner has derived from their tariff?

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The exports from Canada to foreigners have decreased 40 per cent., while the exports from foreigners to Canada have, as I have said, largely increased. On the other hand, in spite of the tariff, in spite of everything in the natural course of trade and communication, the exports to the United Kingdom have increased 85 per cent. in fifteen years, and the net result, which I desire to impress upon you, is that in spite of the Preference which Canada has given us, their tariff has pressed, and still presses, with the greatest severity, upon its best customer, and has favoured the foreigner, who is constantly doing his best to shut out her goods.

"Now, what is the present position? I believe it is true of Canada—it is true, I believe, of every Colony—we take already, by far, the largest proportion of Colonial exports, but there is not the least doubt that we might double or treble the amount that we take, but we cannot do so until we have the reciprocal advantage, and until you take in exchange a larger proportion of our goods, and so enable us to pay for the imports which we should receive from you. And I think the very valuable experience—somewhat disappointing and discouraging as I have already pointed out, but the very valuable experience which we have derived from the history of the Canadian tariff—shows that while we may most readily and most gratefully accept from you any Preference which you may be willing voluntarily to accord to us, we cannot bargain with you for it; we cannot pay for it unless you go much further and enable us to enter your home market on terms of greater equality. I am making that statement as a general statement, but I am well aware that the conditions of the Colonies vary immensely, and that a good deal

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of what I have said does not apply to the Colony of the Cape or the Colony of Natal. But so long as a Preferential tariff, even a munificent Preference, is still sufficiently Protective to exclude us altogether, or nearly so, from your markets, it is no satisfaction to us that you have imposed even greater disability upon the same goods if they come from foreign markets, especially if the articles in which the foreigners are interested come in under more favourable conditions."

Mr Seddon brought forward a Motion to the effect that Preferential Tariffs, in Colonies where they did not already exist, should be established by way of rebate on Duties on British manufactured goods carried in British-owned ships, and that in the Mother Country rebate of Duty on Colonial products should be conceded. It was not likely that so sweeping a scheme would be carried off-hand; not, perhaps, probable that the representatives of other Colonies would concur in the proposal of an individual Minister. It was decided, therefore, that the several Premiers should confer privately with Mr Gerald Balfour, President of the Board of Trade, and, when the results of these meetings had been reported, the Conference should hold a general discussion. The arrangements made at the Board of Trade were that Canada, as before, should give a Preference of 33⅓ per cent. (and an additional Preference on lists of selected articles); New Zealand, an all-round Preference of 10 per cent., or its equivalent in respect of lists of selected articles; Australia, a Preferential treatment not yet determined in amount; Cape Colony and Natal, a Preference of 25 per cent., or its equivalent on dutiable goods, other than specially rated articles. Finally, a Resolution was adopted to

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cover the general principle of the particular arrangements :—

That Preferential Trade between the United Kingdom and Colonies would stimulate commercial intercourse and strengthen the Empire;

That, under existing conditions in the Colonies, it is not practicable to establish Free Trade between them and the Mother Country;

That it is desirable that such Colonies as have not already given a substantial Preference to the products and manufactures of the United Kingdom should adopt that policy "as far as their circumstances permit";

That the Imperial Government should be invited to consider the expediency of giving a Preferential treatment to the products and manufactures of the Colonies;

That the Colonial Premiers will, at the earliest opportunity, submit to their respective Governments the principle of this Resolution, and request them to take such measures as may be necessary to give effect to it.

A separate Memorandum was handed in by the Canadian Ministers, who had asked that, in return for the Preference given to products of the Mother Country, the food products from the Dominion should be exempted from the Duty recently imposed by Parliament. Mr Chamberlain, however, had been unable to recommend this course to his colleagues. The results of the Preference had not been so great as the Canadian Ministers claimed, and such a change as they requested would be an important departure from the fiscal policy of the United Kingdom, which could not be contemplated unless the Dominion could offer some further material concessions; the substance of the Canadian Minister's reply was

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that, if the Imperial Government would seriously consider the principle of Preferential Trade, and would exempt the food products of the Dominion from present and future Duties, they would endeavour to give the British manufacturer some increased advantage over his foreign competitors.

Among other matters dealt with at the Conference, were a proposed modification of the Navigation Laws within the Empire, and the advisability of withdrawing the privileges of Coastwise Trade (including trade between Mother Country and Colonies, and between different Colonies) from countries which confine the corresponding trade to ships of their own nationality: as to Mail Services and Shipping Subsidies, a Resolution was passed that the whole question should be generally considered, and that in all new contracts clauses should be inserted to prevent excessive freight charges and undue preference to foreigners, and to ensure that such steamers as might be suitable should be at the service of the Imperial Government in time of War as cruisers or transports.

A startling sequel to these discussions was provided on 15th May 1903, when Mr Chamberlain paid his first political visit to his constituents after his return from South Africa. The announcement which he made—that he was personally in favour of establishing Preferential tariffs between the Mother Country and the various Colonies—he represented not as any sudden impulse, but rather as a result of what he humorously called "the calm with which the solitude of the illimitable Veldt had affected his constitution." He led up very carefully to his new declaration of policy.

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After dwelling on the results of his mission, and the hopes which he had formed as to the birth of a "new nation" compacted of the "two strong races who are bound to live together in South Africa," he declared that on what we might do within "the next few years" would depend the enormous issue "whether this great Empire of ours is to stand together as one free nation—if necessary, against all the world—or whether it is to fall apart into separate States, each selfishly seeking its own interest alone, losing sight of the common weal, and losing also all the advantages which union can give."

The present, he said, was a "creative" period. We were standing at the beginning of a new era. Though this was an old country and an old Kingdom, the Empire was not old. At present the population of Great Britain and Ireland outnumbered four times the white inhabitants of the Colonies. But how long would that proportion be maintained? It was not impossible that by the end of the present century our fellow-subjects beyond the Seas would be as numerous as ourselves. Hitherto, their rate of increase had been retarded by various causes that no longer existed—by Imperial neglect of Colonial interests, and by the superior attractions which the United States had offered to emigrants. But Great Britain had awakened to her responsibilities, and the United States were filling up. There was still time to consolidate the Empire.

The Colonies had proved that in a time of danger they would come forward in defence of the Empire. In the late War they had sent in at least 50,000 soldiers to fight alongside British troops. At present it was true that the Colonial Governments had not made any ade-

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quate recognition of their duty to contribute towards the expenses of Imperial Defence, but it must be remembered that the idea of a common responsibility was still new, and we had done nothing to encourage it. Yet they had recently shown themselves willing to respond to his appeal. The people of Natal had taken on themselves no slight burden in connection with the War, and in the Transvaal all classes had agreed in assuming a liability which amounted to £80 a head of the white population. Nevertheless, it was incumbent on the Colonies, if they valued the privileges of Empire, to accept a greater share of its obligations. He would speak on this point in Australia or in Canada as strongly as he had spoken in South Africa, nor did he fear that such frankness would give offence.

But the question of trade and commerce was one of the greatest importance. How were we to keep the trade of the Colonies, to increase it, and promote it—even at the risk of lessening the trade with our foreign competitors? It was true that our Colonial Trade was much less than our Foreign Trade, and the inference of "Little Englanders" was that while we should foster the latter we might safely disregard the former. Mr Chamberlain's conclusion was "exactly the opposite." Every advance which the Colonies made we should reciprocate. Though somewhat slack in contributing towards military expenditure, they were doing a great deal to promote the Union of the Empire—doing it in their own way and by their own means.

First among those means was the offer of Preferential tariffs. Immediately after Mr Chamberlain's departure for South Africa a Conference had commenced work at Bloemfontein,

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attended by representatives of all the South African Colonies, and a recommendation had been made that the various States should offer a Preference of 25 per cent. on all dutiable goods from the Mother Country. Canada had given us the same advantage in 1898, and in 1900 she had increased it to 33⅓ per cent.; and, though the results had been "somewhat disappointing," the tendency towards a diminution of trade between the Dominion and the United Kingdom had been arrested, and a sensible increase had been realised.

"But," (he continued) "the Ministers of Canada, when they were over here last year, made me a further definite offer. They said, 'We have done for you as much as we can do, voluntarily and freely and without return. If you are willing to reciprocate in any way, we are prepared to reconsider our Tariff with a view of seeing whether we cannot give you further reductions, especially in regard to those goods in which you come into competition with foreigners; and we will do this if you will meet us by giving us a drawback on the small tax of 1s. per quarter which you have put upon corn.' Well, that was the offer, which we had to refuse. I must say that, if I could treat matters of this kind solely in regard to my position as Secretary of State for the Colonies, I should have said, 'That is a fair offer, that is a generous offer, from your point of view, and it is an offer which we might ask our people to accept.' But speaking for the Government as a whole, not in the interests of the Colonies, I am obliged to say that it is contrary to the established fiscal policy of this country, and that we hold ourselves bound to keep open market for all the world, even if they close their

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markets to us, and that, therefore, so long as that is the mandate of the British public, we are not in a position to offer any Preference or favour whatever, even to our own children. We cannot make any difference between those who treat us well and those who treat us badly.

"Yes, but that is the doctrine which I am told is the accepted doctrine of the Free trader, and we are all Free traders. Well, I am. I have considerable doubt whether the interpretation of Free Trade which is current amongst a certain limited section is the true interpretation. I am perfectly certain that I am not a Protectionist, but I want to find out whether the interpretation is that our only duty is to buy in the cheapest market without regard to whether we can sell. If that is the theory of Free Trade that finds acceptance here and elsewhere, then, in pursuance of that policy, you will lose the advantage of a reduction, a further reduction, in Duties, which your great Colony of Canada offers to the manufacturers of this country, and you may lose a great deal more, because in the speech which the Chancellor of the Exchequer—Minister of Finance, as he is called in Canada—made to the Canadian Parliament the other day, which he has just sent me, I find he says that 'if we are told definitely that Great Britain, the Mother Country, can do nothing for us in the way of Reciprocity, we must reconsider our position and reconsider the Preference that we have already given.'"

Nor was this attitude unreasonable, Mr Chamberlain suggested, since the Dominion had been penalised by Germany for the Preference given to British goods, and an extra Duty had been imposed on imports from Canada. Was

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the United Kingdom to leave Canada alone to fight its own battle? This was an absolutely new situation, one never contemplated by Mr Cobden and Mr Bright. There were two alternatives before us. Either we could maintain what Mr Chamberlain believed to be a "purely technical interpretation of Free Trade," or we should resume the power of free negotiation, and, if necessary, of retaliation—so that we might be able to protect our own interests, and safeguard our relations between ourselves and our Colonies.

It will be observed that, great as was the curiosity which this speech excited, it contained no doctrine which the Colonial Secretary had not advocated on many previous occasions—no expression of opinion in which he had not been anticipated by Lord Salisbury, who frequently complained, both in Office and in Opposition, that the Foreign Secretary was powerless to assist British or Colonial trade, since he was not allowed to practise, or able to threaten, retaliation against hostile tariffs. The reason for the effect produced on the public mind by Mr Chamberlain's declaration was that—while putting it forward as a matter for future consideration, and treating it as a personal suggestion rather than a statement of Ministerial policy—he gave it a distinct air of practical urgency. "I desire," he said, "that a discussion on this subject shall be opened. The time has not yet come to settle it, but it seems to me that, for good or for evil, this is an issue much greater in its consequences than any of our local disputes. . . . I do not think myself that a General Election is very near; but, whether it is near or distant, I think our opponents may, perhaps, find that the issues which they propose to raise are not the issues on which we shall take

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the opinion of the country. If we raise an issue of this kind, the answer will depend not upon petty personal considerations, not upon temporary interests, but upon whether the people of this country really have it in their hearts to do all that is necessary, even if it occasionally goes against their own prejudices, to consolidate an Empire which can only be maintained by relations of interest as well as by relations of sentiment."

This very definite utterance was followed up on May 22nd by a speech in the House of Commons. Challenged to explain his position with regard to Old Age Pensions for the Deserving Poor, he declared that the question was by no means "dead." The funds might be provided, he said, if such a review of our fiscal policy as he believed to be desirable at an early date were to be adopted by the country.

Hardly had Mr Chamberlain made his declaration as to Imperial Reciprocity than Sir Charles Dilke, an early and at one time an intimate associate, pointed out that there was nothing in the views now proclaimed which was inconsistent with many previous utterances. He forestalled the regular Leaders of the Opposition in asking Ministers to explain, in the House of Commons, how far they agreed with the opinions of the Colonial Secretary. In certain quarters it had been suggested that the Birmingham speech was a bid for power—that Mr Chamberlain wished to raise an issue on which he could part company with an Administration that seemed to be losing popularity, and create a new Party with himself as the Leader. Mr Balfour's reply disposed of that theory. He ridiculed the attempt to make mischief between his colleague and himself, and

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showed that, in principle at least, there was little difference in their positions. It was, he said, a fair question for debate whether the time had not come when we should give up the theory that Revenue should only be raised to meet the national expenditure. He reproduced the familiar complaint as to the difficulty of negotiating a Commercial Treaty without the power of fiscal retaliation. There was also another reason why a Preferential system should be considered. It would bind the Empire more closely together. Nobody could deny that this would be a "very good object"—the only question was whether the price would not be too high. He put aside the idea, which had not been proposed, of taxing the raw materials for our manufactures. But he would not dogmatise on the question of taxing the food of the people.

"You will (he went on), in my opinion, never have a tax on the food of the people in this country, except as part of a big policy which they heartily and conscientiously accept. With that you can do it. Without that you cannot do it. Nor do I think that you could go back to the old Protective days, and in the interests of this industry or that industry, be the industry what it may, ask the people of this country to tax their food. I do not think that is within the range of practical politics. But if you could, by means of a tax on food, put the whole of the fiscal and Imperial position on a different and better footing, is it so certain that the working classes of this country would repudiate the suggestion? I do not know. But, supposing that, by means of a general tax upon food-stuffs, it were possible to stop this process by which, not merely in foreign countries, but in our own

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Colonies, there was being created a system of protection of an enormous number of manufacturing interests; supposing it were possible, not, indeed, to obtain full Free Trade—that, I think, is beyond the power of any conceivable combination—but to obtain a large measure of Free Trade in the manufactured goods of the Colonies, I am not sure that would not be worth while." There were two great difficulties, Mr Balfour admitted, in the way of Mr Chamberlain's scheme—the traditional dislike of the English people for a tax on food, and the traditional affection of the Colonies for Protectionism. Unless both these could be overcome, the plan was not practicable.

There was no contradiction, the Prime Minister said, between his own views and Mr Chamberlain's. But even if there were some difference of degree it would not imply discord. He himself, as on the Irish University Question, held and had proclaimed opinions not shared by his colleagues, and Mr Chamberlain was entitled to an equal liberty. Moreover, as Colonial Secretary, he was more or less bound to demand a hearing for the policy which had been formally adopted and approved by the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies at their recent Conference. Could he have permitted the Resolution in favour of Preferential Trade between the Mother Country and the Colonies to remain slumbering in the pages of a Blue-book?

The only point on which any difference could be detected between the Prime Minister's and the Colonial Secretary's attitude was that Mr Balfour treated the proposal as somewhat remote—not a question for this Session or the next or the one after—whereas Mr Chamberlain's tone, the energy which he throws into every

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argument, pointed to an urgent and immediate propaganda.

That impression was not modified when he made a supplementary explanation. He began with some considerable admissions. Nothing could be done without a Mandate from the people of the United Kingdom, and following that must be a Mandate from the Colonies. "Nothing (he said), can be worse than to negotiate with a Colony, and probably come to an agreement, and then at the next General Election find that the whole idea was repudiated by the country. I can conceive nothing more dangerous to Union than that. Before we begin to negotiate with a Colony we must have some knowledge what the opinion of the country is in regard to the principle at stake. If we had this Mandate, the first thing I should do to carry it out would be to consult the Colonies. I should call, in that case, another Conference of the representatives of the Self-Governing Colonies, and I have not the slightest doubt myself that, as a result, arrangements which we should consider were perfectly fair between the two countries—arrangements, that is to say, which would give us as much as we gave them—could be completed with the Colonies."

. . . . . .

"There is another thing that we have to find out in order that a Conference of this kind may discuss the matter. We shall have to know from our own people, not only what they will give, but what they want in return. I want to know from every manufacturing district in this country—and I hope I shall learn before long. I hope the Chambers of Commerce, who I see everywhere

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are taking this matter up, will give their assistance to a conclusion being arrived at by saying what particular article or articles of manufactured produce in their districts could be much more largely sold if Preferential rates were given by the Colonies upon it or them, and what the amount of that Preferential rate ought to be to give them any substantial advantage. The House will see that all this will necessarily take time, and that the claim that we without this information should beforehand, and before we have got anything in the nature of an expression of general agreement on the part of the people of this country, put a plan before the House—I suppose a sort of draft Treaty with our Colonies—seems to me to be an absolute absurdity."

"Without binding myself for all time, or shutting my eyes to further or fresh information, I was going to say that I do not see that it will be desirable to put any tax at all upon raw material, for the reason that it would be very difficult to find raw material which would be suitable for this purpose, and if it were to be imposed it would have to be accompanied by drawbacks on finished exports; and, though we know that is not at all impossible, because every other country in the world does it, it is a complicated way of doing that which may be done in a more simple way. Therefore we come to this: that if you are to give a Preference to your Colonies—I do not say you are—you must put a tax upon food. I make honourable members a present of that, and I am prepared to go into any workman's or labourer's house in this country and address a meeting of workmen or labourers and make certain calculations. Assuming that the duty be 1s. or 2s. on corn, I am prepared to go to them and say,

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'This policy, if carried out, will cost you so much a week more than you are paying to-day for your food,' putting aside any economic question as to whether they would or would not pay the whole of any Duty imposed. My argument would be this:—'I assume that you will pay every penny of the cost. I will tell you what you consume, and I will give you a table by which you can tell for yourself how much extra wages you must get in order to cover the extra expense of living to which you will be put.' There is an argument to which honourable members opposite would have to give their serious attention. If they can show that the whole result of this business will be greater cost of living to the working classes, and no increase of income, then I have no doubt whatever all their most pessimistic prophecies will come true. But if I can show that, in return for what I ask, I will give more than I take—well, then, I think that, poorly as they may think of my judgment, I may still have a chance. That also suggests another consideration. Suppose you put on a Duty, and produce a very large Revenue, we do not want that Revenue for expenditure, which is at present normal. Therefore, we have a large sum at our disposal. To whom shall we give that sum? In the first place I ask, who is going to pay this tax? The working classes are going to pay three-fourths, because it is the calculation that of all taxes on consumption the poorer classes pay three-fourths, and the well-to-do one-fourth. That being so, to my mind it is a mere matter of justice that the working classes are entitled to every penny of the three-fourths. But I would, without the slightest hesitation, give them the other fourth, because I have always held—it is

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part of my speeches on this subject of social reform—that while it would be absolute confiscation to put the cost of social reform wholly on the shoulders of one class, and that the richer class, the minority, yet, on the other hand, it was perfectly fair that they should make a contribution in return for the indirect advantages which they get from the prosperity and contentment of the country."

. . . . . .

"Of one thing I am certain, and that is that, in spite of any decision which may be come to when this matter is raised, if there should be depression in some of our greatest industries, and this result which I predict should follow, nothing would prevent the people of this country from imposing a Duty which would defend them against such unfair competition. I have indicated, at all events, the lines of the movement, and I have indicated the discussion which I wish to raise—a discussion which I promise I will raise before the country."

Such is the issue which Mr Chamberlain has undertaken to place before the electors, and on the result he has staked his political fortunes.

It is important to understand what exactly he is advocating, and what he has not included in his scheme. He does not propose to establish Free Trade within the British Empire, though from previous utterances it is clear that he would welcome it. Again, he is not working for such a Zollverein as exists within the German Empire. He does not seek to influence, even indirectly, the commercial relations between the various British Colonies and Dependencies. He

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believes in and hopes for such an arrangement in the future, but it is not a part of the plan which he desires to lay before the electors of the United Kingdom and the peoples of the Self-Governing Colonies. All that he aims at for the present is to bring about a series of fiscal bargains between the Mother Country and each of her Colonies—each to be considered on its own merits. So much for the Preferential side of his declaration.

His views as to Retaliation, so far as they have been developed, are confined to exercising pressure on Foreign Governments which have established prohibitive or oppressive Tariffs against imports from the United Kingdom or its Colonies. He would provide our Foreign Office with the means for making a reasonable bargain, with a weapon for extorting equitable treatment from countries which have hitherto granted only such concessions as suited their temporary convenience—at other times hitting us because they knew that we should not hit them back. Nor has he suggested that we should ever become the aggressors, and, for the sake of encouraging some native industry, practise exclusion against foreign producers or manufacturers of the same commodity.

It is clear that the Preference policy and the Retaliation policy are essentially distinct, and that each rests upon its own merits or is liable to separate objections. The two principles might even come into conflict. If it is advisable for the British Empire to retaliate against an outside nation which excludes its products, it might also be advisable for the United Kingdom to exercise similar pressure on those Colonies which laid heavy duties on its products, until they

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were brought to a more Imperial frame of mind. That, however, is not contemplated by Mr Chamberlain, nor can it fairly be used as an argument against his policy, that it would logically sanction such a development.

Although he has hitherto demanded only an inquiry into our fiscal system, and though his more judicious supporters have pledged themselves to nothing further, and although he has refused to produce a definite plan with all the details worked out, it may be assumed that, on the main points, his own mind is made up. He invites his countrymen to make an inquiry—but he is not himself inquiring. He is quite decided as to Imperial Preferences and as to Retaliation. What, then, is his fiscal record?

It has already been pointed out that his principles with regard to Political Economy have always been somewhat "fluid"—he has never accepted the whole Cobdenite doctrine as conclusively established and beyond criticism. A speech which he delivered on 12th August 1881, when he was President of the Board of Trade, has recently been cited against him as evidence of tergiversation. He was arguing in the House of Commons against a proposal to retaliate against the Bounties which the French Government had established on beet-sugar. His words were, no doubt, sufficiently explicit: "He could conceive it just possible," he said, "that under the sting of great suffering, strange remedies might be tried, and some time or other people might be found foolish enough to tax the food of the country. If that were done the recurrence of depression would be the sequel for such a state of things as we had never seen since the repeal of the Corn Laws. . . . The tax on food would mean a

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decline in the value of wages, certainly in their proportionate value—wages would purchase less. It would mean an increase in the price of every article produced in this country, and the loss of our foreign trade which was so valuable."

But in justice to Mr Chamberlain, though he does not greatly value the virtue of consistency, another passage from the same speech should also be quoted :—

"What," he asked, "did the advocate of Reciprocity mean? It was said to be the duty of the working classes to make some sacrifices in order to reacquire the free and fair trade we had lost. He did not say that view was entirely without justification. We were to retaliate on foreign countries by putting on Protective duties in order to induce them to take off duties. How long was that retaliation to last? For, say, five years? But suppose the foreign country did not give way. Then, what duties should be put on? That was a question which every advocate of Reciprocity was bound to answer."

It will be seen, then, that twenty-two years ago, when he was a rising Radical Minister, the colleague of Mr Bright at Birmingham, he contemplated without absolute scorn, though certainly he did not embrace, the view that the working classes should be asked to submit to some sacrifice for the sake of "free and fair trade," and that sacrifice was already defined as a tax on food.

On the other hand, speaking at Birmingham not two years later (30th March 1883), he used the following very uncompromising language :—

"Lord Salisbury would, if he had the power . . . impose duties on food and clothing, and on the raw materials coming to us from America, and

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from our Colonies . . . any such scheme if it should be carried out means that every workman in Birmingham and throughout the country should pay more for his loaf, and more for his clothes, and more for every other necessary of his life in order that great manufacturers might keep up their profits, and in order, above all, that great landlords might maintain and raise their rents."

Another utterance of the same tenour was made at Birmingham, 5th May 1885—in the days of the Doctrine of Ransom. Fair Trade, he said, was the cry under which the demand for Protection was covered. Property, he added, could not pay its debt to Labour by taxing its means of subsistence. His denunciations of the Corn Laws and of recent suggestions for restoring them (as *e.g.* in a speech delivered at Ipswich in the same year) are less to the point, since neither he nor anybody else in his senses dreamt of laying such a Duty on imported corn as would make it profitable for the British farmer to grow wheat on a large scale. Against Protection that would raise the price to 60 shillings or even 120 shillings a quarter, Mr Chamberlain would fight as hard as any of the Cobdenites with whom he was once associated.

How far has he modified or explained his declarations of 15th May, 22nd May, and 28th May? On 3rd June he wrote a somewhat elaborate letter to a correspondent (published on the 8th), in which he declared the condemnation of his plan by Trade Union Leaders was not an index to the general opinion of the working classes :—

"It will be impossible," he went on, "to secure preferential treatment with the Colonies

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without some duty on corn as well as on other articles of food, because these are the chief articles of Colonial produce. Whether this will raise the cost of living, is a matter of opinion, and there is no doubt that in many cases a duty of this kind is paid by the exporter, and it really depends on the extent of competition among the exporting countries. For instance, I think it is established that the shilling duty recently imposed on corn was met by a reduction of price and of freights in the United States of America, and that the tax did not, therefore, fall in any way on the consumers here. But even if the price of food is raised, the rate of wages will certainly be raised in greater proportion. This has been the case both in the United States and in Germany. In the former country the available balance left to the working man, after he has paid for necessaries, is much larger than here. These are facts which we have to bring to the notice of the working man generally.

"There is another side of the question which also requires discussion. At present we go into negotiations with foreign countries empty-handed. We have nothing to give, and we have to take what they are good enough to leave for us. If we were able to bargain on equal terms, I believe that the duties now imposed on our produce would be generally reduced. There would be a competition among foreign nations for our markets, which would bring us nearer to real Free Trade than we have ever been.

"As regards Old Age Pensions, I would not myself look at the matter unless I felt able to promise that a large scheme for the provision of such pensions to all who have been thrifty and well-conducted would be

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assured by a revision of our system of import duties."

On 26th June he was the guest of the Constitutional Club at a luncheon given in honour of his work in South Africa. In his speech he repeated with emphasis his previous declaration that a system of Preferential Tariffs was the only system by which the British Empire could be kept together. Incidentally, he exposed himself to criticism by two of the inadvertencies into which he is sometimes betrayed by his dialectical method. He represented that "over 10 million kinsmen" buy goods from us every year at the rate of £10 a head, while 300 million foreigners only take a few shillings worth a head. The point of the contrast was spoiled when it was remarked next day that in estimating the average commercial value of each of the King's subjects he had forgotten to reckon the inhabitants of India and the other natives of our numerous Dependencies. When they are counted in, the comparison is by no means so flattering to the value of Imperial Trade. Nor is it very striking when the total amount of our exports to the Self-Governing Colonies only is divided by the number of white inhabitants. Again, in seeking to emphasise the drawbacks of an "existing system of free imports" (he would not call it Free Trade), he quoted, "on the high authority of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman" the statement that "12 millions of our people are always on the verge of starvation." This absurd statement would not have imposed on Mr Chamberlain, nor would he have repeated it as a serious argument, if he had given it a few minutes thought. It appears to have originated in an estimate, misunderstood and misquoted, by Mr Charles

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Booth, of the number of persons who subsist on precarious employment. Mr Chamberlain, however, found that it had been adopted by a political opponent, and thought it good enough to use against him. But these were the mere flourishes of debate. And a stolid people which has just begun to puzzle its brains again about fiscal problems does not like to be trifled with when it is trying to "inquire." Mr Chamberlain was cautious enough when he approached the subject of "taxing the food of the people":—

"I come to the critical point. I am told 'it is a main feature of your plan to increase the cost of the poor man's food.' Is it true? If it were it would be serious. I am not going to enter upon any economical discussion. I leave that to the experts, especially to the modern school of political economy, which does not invariably accept the positions which were laid down with so much confidence by the economists of an older school. I leave it to them whether a tax upon any article of consumption will in the long run inevitably be paid by the consumer, or whether it may not possibly be paid in part or in whole by the producer of the article. But I put that aside. I say—as I have said before—I am willing to assume for the sake of argument—although I do not believe it myself—that the whole cost of the tax will fall upon the consumer; but even then, suppose that the tax upon corn increases the price of bread, does that necessarily increase the cost of living? 'Man does not live by bread alone.' If the increased cost of bread has made a proportionate decrease on some other articles, either of consumption or that are necessary to

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the comfort of life, then, in that case, although the price of a particular article may be raised, the cost of living will not be increased in the slightest degree. Well, you know that I have suggested — it is my own suggestion, nobody else is answerable for it — that inasmuch as any alteration of our fiscal system must largely increase the sums received in the shape of indirect taxation, that a portion of those sums, at any rate, should be applied in order to provide old-age pensions for the poor. Thereupon I am told that this is a most immoral proposition; that it is a discreditable attempt to bribe the working classes of this country. That criticism is hasty, and it is harsh. Those who make it have altogether forgotten my past in this matter. I entered upon an investigation of the subject many years ago. It is always near my heart. I believe that such a system would be of immense advantage to the people. I have earnestly desired to make it successful, and up to the present time I have failed, because it was impossible to see any source from which the money which would be requisite could fairly and justly come. As long as we depend so much upon our direct taxation, as long as there is an inclination to put every increased expense upon this direct taxation, I say it would be very unfair to think even of old-age pensions, as the result would be an enormously increased burden upon the payers of Income-tax, many of whom are already sufficiently straitened in the condition of life in which they find themselves. That has been my difficulty.

"Was it not natural when, in connection with this new subject, I thought that it was probable large sums might be at the disposal of any

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future Chancellor of the Exchequer, that I should put in a word for my favourite hobby, if you like to call it so, and that I should ask the working classes—for it is to them that I look for the answer—to consider whether it would not be better for them to take the money which is theirs in the shape of a deferred payment and a provision for old age rather than in the shape of an immediate advantage? That is all that I have done, but it has no part whatever in the question of a reform in our fiscal policy. That is a matter which will come later. When we have got the money, then will be the time to say what we shall do with it, and if the working classes refuse to take my advice, if they prefer this immediate advantage, why, it stands to reason that if, for instance, they are called upon to pay threepence a week additional in the cost of their bread, they may be entirely relieved by a reduction to a similar amount in the cost of their tea or their sugar or even of their tobacco. If what is taken out of one pocket can be put into the other, there is no working man in the Kingdom, no man, however poor, who need fear under the system I propose that without his goodwill the cost of living will be increased by a single farthing. I think that I might try to make this clear, I think there never was a grosser imposture than the cry of the dear loaf. We know what is intended by it; but I say again that the course which is indicated in that expression is one which there is not the slightest chance that any Government will follow, unless, indeed, as I have said before, it should become evident that it was the desire of the working men themselves in this way to insure themselves against old age, unless it was perfectly clear that they

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preferred that to any reduction in the general cost of living."

The meaning of this declaration was not obscure. Mr Chamberlain no longer intended to insist that the revenue raised on foreign imports should be devoted to Old Age Pensions, and he was convinced that the working classes would not agree to a general increase in the cost of living. They did not believe that it would be compensated by a rise in wages. If they were to agree to a tax on bread it would only be because they were promised a reduction in regard to other articles of almost equal necessity. Acting on this interpretation of his latest utterance, various persons, more or less qualified to divine his latest opinion, put forward different schemes by which it might be given effect. But it was thought advisable by the Tariff Reform League to draw an explicit statement from Mr Chamberlain himself. His reply, dated 15th August, was published on the 18th :—

"I had hoped," he wrote to Mr Griffith-Bosawen, "that the statements which I have already publicly made on the questions referred to in your letter were so definite that they could not be misunderstood nor misrepresented. As, however, you say that this is not the case, I have no hesitation in repeating them.

"I have never suggested any tax whatever on raw materials, such as wool or cotton, and I believe that such a tax is entirely unnecessary for the purposes which I have in view—that is, for a mutual preference with our Colonies, and for enabling us to bargain for better terms with our foreign competitors.

"As regards food, there is nothing in the policy of Tariff reform which I have put before

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the country which need increase in the slightest degree the cost of living of any family in this country."

There, for the present, the matter stands. Unless something unexpected happens, Mr Chamberlain is engaged to state his "case for the inquiry" in a series of public meetings which he will address in the Autumn, and he has also promised, in January, to summarise in "the Metropolis of the Empire and the centre of the commerce of the world" the conclusions at which he has arrived, and which he desires to submit to the consideration of his countrymen.

No attempt is made here to pronounce judgment on his policy, so far as he has explained it. Wisely or unwisely, the Prime Minister has refused, in the House of Commons, to permit a discussion—for which, *ex hypothesi*, the material was lacking—unless the Leader of the Opposition would challenge the Government by proposing a formal Vote of Censure. Nevertheless, in the Debate on the Corn Duty (9th June), both the present and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer expressed their strong dissent from the policy of Mr Chamberlain. Mr Ritchie had no objection to an inquiry being held, but he would be surprised if it were to show them any practical means of carrying out a system of Preferential Tariffs. He was a convinced Free Trader, and, as at present advised, could not be a party to a policy which, in his opinion, would be detrimental both to this country and the Colonies. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach declared that it would be deeply injurious to this country, and would do more to disunite than to unite the Empire. Much as he disapproved of the repeal of the Corn Duty, he accepted it as "the alternative

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policy to a much greater evil." He was opposed to the principle of using our Tariff for purposes of Retaliation and Preference. It could only be adopted, and only be maintained, with the general consent of the country. What chance had the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary of obtaining such a general assent? The promulgation of this new policy had performed something akin to a miracle—it had united the Opposition. If persisted in it would, in his opinion, "destroy the Unionist Party as an instrument of good." In the Upper House (15th June), it was denounced in even stronger terms by Lord Goschen, another Unionist ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, as "a gamble in food." He would not countenance the suggestion that a rise in prices would mean an increase of wages. Lord Lansdowne's speech was taken to indicate a general agreement with Mr Chamberlain's policy, but the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Balfour of Burleigh, while supporting an inquiry, indicated quite unmistakably that they did not believe it would result in establishing the need for reversing our fiscal policy.

An important side-issue was also raised in the Upper House, on 10th July, by Lord Northbrook, who wished to know how a Preferential System would be applied to India. Was India to be left out? and how could it be included? To this Lord Lansdowne replied that no plan had yet been formulated, but that India would certainly not be excluded from the scope of the Government inquiry.

It will be observed that most of the hostile criticism of Mr Chamberlain's new departure has been directed against the Preferential Scheme, while his proposal that the Imperial Government

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should be armed with powers to retaliate on tariffs directed against the trade of the United Kingdom or any of its Colonies, though not universally accepted, has almost escaped attack, except from the thorough-going adherents of Cobdenism. This is not because Englishmen as a rule are insensible to the advantages of developing trade within the Empire, because they fail to see that a Preferential System would be a firm bond of union, or because they are doubtful of the motives with which Mr Chamberlain has propounded the policy. They are waiting for him to show how it can be carried out—*i.e.*, without exposing the United Kingdom to a loss quite disproportionate to any advantage expected for the Colonies.*

If the verdict on this point goes against him, he still has Retaliation to fall back upon. But that, it may be said, would have little bearing on the Colonial policy with which he desires to associate his name. Yet it is not altogether unconnected. There can be no doubt that a strong impression was produced in the country by the Correspondence (published 13th July) between Germany and Great Britain in regard to Canada.

Both Germany and Belgium took strong exception to the action of the Dominion in conferring a Tariff advantage on goods imported from the Mother Country. It was inconsistent, they said, with the Commercial Treaties then in force, which applied to British Colonies as well as to Great Britain, and they claimed to share the Preferential treatment accorded to Great

* He has left himself one way of retreat, and one only. He depends, he wrote on June 3, on Colonial opinion. If that were "hostile or even apathetic" he would feel "justified in abandoning the struggle."

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Britain. After some correspondence, the Foreign Minister in Berlin demanded that we should put an end to the violation of the Treaty involved in the action of the Canadian Government. Legally, there was no reply so long as the Treaties remained in existence, and, as we have seen, notice of "denunciation" was forthwith given by our Government. In the course of the prolonged negotiations for a new arrangement with Germany, it was pointed out by Lord Salisbury that the French Colonies gave a Preference to the Republic, yet were admitted by Germans to the most-favoured-nation treatment. Why should Canada be placed in a worse position? Lord Salisbury refused, "under any circumstances," to acquiesce in the previous restrictions on the action of our Colonies. In consequence of this, in the temporary arrangement which was arrived at, Canada was excluded from most-favoured-nation treatment. So the matter dragged on till June, 1899, when Lord Salisbury again pressed his comparison of the British with the French Colonies. Baron von Richthofen replied that German commercial relations with France and French Colonies were regulated by the Treaty of Frankfort.

"Canada," he added, "has deprived Germany of a valuable right, of which we retained possession for more than thirty years under the Anglo-German Commercial Treaty which has come to an end. It cannot be expected of Germany, that upon a change being made by one party in the state of affairs which has hitherto prevailed she should accept the change without more ado; it is the less to be expected, as it is in the interests of the development of the commerce of the world, and of the mutual relations of trade and navi-

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gation between Germany and the British Mother Country, that, in the British Colonies, equal treatment should be given to the products of Germany and of Great Britain."

Nothing further of importance happened until 18th March 1903, when Lord Lansdowne inquired from Sir Frank Lascelles what steps, if any, were being taken by the German Government with regard to the law empowering them to give most-favoured-nation treatment to this country after 31st December next, on which date the temporary arrangements made under the law of 29th May 1901 come to an end. By this time it was known that the South African Colonies had decided to give Preferential treatment to British goods, and Baron von Richthofen was doubtful whether the desire of the German Government to prolong the arrangement could be realised if Germany were differentiated against in important parts of the British Empire, and if, in particular, the report were confirmed that German goods would in the future be less favourably treated than British, not only in Canada, but also in British South Africa. He told Sir F. Lascelles verbally that if other British Colonies followed Canada's example, and large portions of the British Empire were to give Preferential treatment to Great Britain, it would be very difficult to obtain the consent of the Reichstag to the prolongation of most-favoured-nation treatment to Great Britain herself.

That was on 23rd April, and on 20th June Lord Lansdowne wrote an important Despatch to the Berlin Embassy, in which, after recapitulating the history of the affair, he said, referring to Baron von Richthofen's statement, just quoted :—

"This communication has greatly increased

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the difficulty of the situation, and I have now to give you the following instructions as to the language which you should hold with regard to this most important question. You should, in the first place, remind the German Government that the Treaty of 1865 between the United Kingdom and Germany was terminated by His Majesty's Government, in order that this country and her Colonies might be at liberty to make such arrangements as might be considered desirable in respect of their mutual trade. To this policy His Majesty's Government adhere. As regards Canada, the action of the Dominion was taken only after every effort had been made to secure fair treatment for Canadian produce in Germany. It was only after these efforts had failed, and Germany had persistently refused to accord to Canadian produce the same most-favoured-nation treatment that Canada accorded to German produce, that Canada was driven in self-defence to measures of retaliation. If Germany will restore Canadian produce to the most-favoured-nation terms, His Majesty's Government have not the least doubt that the increased duties which have just been imposed on German goods will be at once removed. Should the German Government, however, persist in the attitude which they have taken up on this matter, and, further, extend to the products of other British Colonies, and even to those of the United Kingdom, whose Tariff is at the present moment based upon the most liberal principles, the discrimination which they have enforced against Canada, a very wide and serious issue must inevitably be raised, involving the fiscal relations of this country and the German Empire."

Baron von Richthofen's reply is dated 27th

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June last. He takes credit for Germany having exhibited "a special desire to meet the wishes of Great Britain, for which there is no example in German legislation, either before or since." He goes on :—

"The application of the German General Tariff to Canada entails no unjustifiable discrimination, still less any penalising of that Colony, as has often been asserted; the Measure is merely a consequence of the expiry of the Anglo-German Commercial Treaty, and is necessitated by German law. No penal Measures or additional duties have, so far—and this must be expressly emphasised—been applied by Germany to Canada. Moreover, there is in the German procedure—for we wish also to correct this supposition, which has been often repeated—no interference in the relations between Mother Country and Colony. After the expiry of the Anglo-German Commercial Treaty, Germany could only choose whether she would apply her General Tariff to Great Britain and all her Colonies, as according to German law would have been necessary in the ordinary course, or whether she would limit the application of the General Tariff to those parts of the British Empire in which there had been an alteration of the *status quo* affecting imports from Germany. The choice of the latter alternative, which is much more favourable to Great Britain and her Colonies, is considered by Germany to be requisite in the interests of mutual commercial policy, and to be practically justified, because Great Britain had declared on the most diverse occasions, that her Colonies formed independent territories for Customs purposes, and were independent as regards their decisions respecting

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the regulation of their relations with foreign countries."

"If, however," declares the German Minister, "the English Colonies are to be in a position to follow out their own Customs policy, other countries must be allowed to treat them as separate Customs territories."

He saw also that his threat to Great Britain had been a mistake in tactics as well as a breach of good manners, and expressed his hope that a practical solution of the difficulty might still be found. To this Lord Lansdowne gave a notably polite reply, but could not accept the explanation which Baron von Richthofen had offered with regard to the menace.

"Baron von Richthofen apparently desires to treat this intimation, which he describes as having been confidentially made to Sir F. Lascelles, as an *obiter dictum* of no great importance. It was, however, impossible for His Majesty's Government so to regard it. The announcement made in Baron von Richthofen's Note, which was not marked 'Confidential,' and was of the most authoritative character, seemed to them at the time, and still seems to them, capable of no other interpretation than this—that if other British Self-Governing Colonies should follow the example of Canada and accord national treatment to British imports, the German Government might find themselves compelled to refuse, not only to those Colonies, but to Great Britain herself, the treatment which, in view of the liberal terms upon which German imports are admitted to this country, we are entitled to expect upon the most ordinary grounds of reciprocity. Such retaliation on the part of the German Government would, in our opinion,

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not be justifiable in itself, and would be inconsistent with the attitude which, as we understand Baron von Richthofen's argument, the German Government desire to assume towards the British Self-Governing Colonies. If it be true, as stated in the Note, that those Colonies are regarded by the German Government as 'independent customs districts' which foreign Powers are at liberty to treat as such, it would follow that no responsibility would attach to the Mother Country for their external Tariff arrangements, and that it would be wholly inequitable and illogical to retaliate upon the Mother Country in consequence of the manner in which the Colonies had made use of their opportunities. This argument, however, although it appears to His Majesty's Government a legitimate rejoinder to that of Baron von Richthofen, is not one on which they desire to lay stress, for so far as the present controversy is concerned, they have no intention of drawing a distinction between their own interests and those of the Self-Governing Colonies."

The terms and the tone of Lord Lansdowne's reply were approved even by Englishmen who understood the Berlin point of view—that Germany was entitled to ask that Canada should be treated either as an independent State or as a Colony, and should not at the same time claim the privileges of both conditions. But any legal case which the Germans could set up was spoiled by the brutality of the methods employed to assert it.

But as it stands, the case suggests a problem on which the Duke of Devonshire has insisted. If a solid scheme of partnership is to be instituted between the Mother Country and

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each of her Colonies, if every Treaty that confers an advantage or imposes a responsibility on the one does the same things to the other, it follows, as Mr Chamberlain has by implication admitted, that the British Government must have some voice in the commercial policy of her Colonies. Or, as Mr Chamberlain and Sir Wilfrid Laurier would prefer to put it, we must call the Colonies to our Councils. This cannot be done without our giving up some of the independence of the Imperial Government or without demanding a corresponding sacrifice from the Colonies. But on this point Sir Wilfrid Laurier would be obdurate. Speaking at Montreal on 21st August, he declared that the price would be too heavy for any advantages to be expected.

"If we are to obtain from the people of Great Britain a concession for which we would be prepared to give an equivalent, and if we are to obtain it also at the expense of the surrender of some of our political rights, for my part I would simply say, let us go no further, for already we have come to the parting of the ways. Canada values too highly the system which made her what she is to consent willingly to part with any portion of it for whatever consideration; and, even for the maintenance of the British Empire, I think it would be a most evil thing if any of our Colonies were to consent to part with any of their legislative independence. Nor do I believe that, in order to make such an arrangement of a commercial nature as I have spoken of a moment ago, we should be called upon to make any sacrifice of dignity and independence."

These and other difficulties were so firmly impressed on Lord Salisbury's mind that, frequently as he had expressed in public his regret

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that he had no means of obtaining fair treatment for British traders at foreign ports, he never took a step towards either a Retaliation or a Preference policy. The last words he uttered on a public platform, before he withdrew from the service of his country, were an eloquent warning, not at the time understood in their full significance, against premature attempts to bring about Imperial Federation. Speaking at the Albert Hall on 8th May 1902, he said:—

"Though I believe it is true that we are at the commencement of a movement of causes, of opinions, and of feelings which will end in changes which will modify the present distribution of power, and the present distribution, I may say, of allegiance, I do not, therefore, on that account, advocate any impatient handling of the phenomena which we have to deal with. There are many men of great intellect and authority who think that the moment has come for some legislative action on our part which should federate the Colonies. But I exhort them, before they do so, to carefully consider what steps they are going to take, and what results they expect to come from them. We have no power by legislation to affect the flow of opinion and of affection which has arisen so largely between the Mother Country and her Daughter States. Those will go on in their own power—in their own irresistible power—and I have no doubt they will leave combinations behind them which will cast into the shade all the glories the British Empire has hitherto displayed. But we cannot safely interfere by legislative action with the natural development of our relations with our Daughter countries. All kinds of difficulties are there before us—difficulties as to

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the burden of finance, difficulties as to the duty of defence, difficulties as to the rights of decision which the Mother Country should retain, and, unless feeling is running very strong and we have a great force behind us, I look with some apprehension upon any attempt to anticipate the events or to foreclose the results—the precious results—which, if we are only patient and careful, the future has in store for the Empire. . . . There is nothing more dangerous than to force a decision before a decision is ready, and, therefore, to produce feelings of discontent, feelings of difficulty, which, if we will only wait, will of themselves bring about the results that we desire. There is no danger that appears to be more serious for the time that lies before us than an attempt to force the various parts of the Empire into a mutual arrangement and subordination for which they are not ready, and which may only produce a reaction in favour of the old state of things."

To Lord Salisbury it was already clear in what direction Mr Chamberlain was about to move; and it is also evident that he was gravely distrustful of the policy which was then fermenting in the mind of a colleague with whom, and against whom, he had fought so many battles in the past, and whose influence in the Cabinet was to be so greatly strengthened by his own retirement.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

MR CHAMBERLAIN'S MAGAZINE ARTICLES

The most important of Mr Chamberlain's early writings appeared in *The Fortnightly Review.* The following is a complete list:—

"The Liberal Party and its Leaders" (1874); "The Next Page of the Liberal Programme" (1874); "The Right Method with the Publicans" (1876); "Lapland Notes and Swedish Licencing" (1876); "Free Schools" (1877); "Municipal Public Houses" (1877); "The New Political Organisation" (1877); "The Caucus" (1879); "Labourers' and Artisans' Dwellings" (1883).

Three articles have been published in *The Nineteenth Century:* in December 1890, "Shall we Americanise our Institutions?"; in November 1892, "The Labour Question"; and in April 1893, "A Bill for the Weakening of Great Britain."

Besides the above, an article on "Municipal Reform" was contributed in 1894 to the defunct *New Review.*

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APPENDIX II

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

THE following list includes most of the official publications relating to subjects mentioned in this book:—

1896

Correspondence relating to Transfer of Bechuanaland to Cape Colony.

Correspondence relating to Boundaries of British Guiana.

Correspondence *re* visit of Bechuanaland Chiefs to this country.

Report from H.M. Colonial Possessions—on Bounties other than Shipping and Navigation.

Return—Amount of Sugar produced in Sugar-Producing Colonies 1889 to 1894 inclusive.

Newfoundland Annual Report for 1894.

Matabeleland: Report of Land Commission and Correspondence.

Copy of Messages of Loyalty from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Papers relating to Commandeering of British Subjects in South African Republic 1894, and Visit of High Commissioner to Pretoria.

South African Republic: Copy of Letter from Sir J. de Wet *re* his Retirement and Correspondence.

Report from Select Committee British South Africa, and Proceedings and Report from Select Committee Cape of Good Hope on Jameson Raid.

1897

Papers relating to Imprisonment at Pretoria of W. H. Davis and Captain W. Sampson.

Correspondence relating to Transfer of Norfolk Island to Government of New South Wales.

South African Republic: Papers relating to closing of Vaal

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River Drifts by Government of South African Republic in October 1895.

Papers relating to Liquor Trade in West Africa.

Second Report Select Committee British South Africa.

Papers relating to Benin Massacre.

Proceedings of a Conference between Secretary of State for Colonies and Premiers of Self-Governing Colonies at Colonial Office, June-July 1897.

Trade of British Empire and Foreign Competition, and Despatch from Mr Chamberlain to Governors of Colonies and High Commissioner of Cyprus, and Reply thereto; Turks and Caicos Island Annual Reports for 1896.

1898

Correspondence relating to proposed changes in the administration of the British South African Company.

British South African Company's Territories—Copies of Charter of 29th October 1889, and Orders in Council.

Cape of Good Hope Correspondence relating to Disturbances in Bechuanaland.

Africa, No. 4 Despatch from H.M. Ambassador at Paris, enclosing copy of Convention between Great Britain and France.

Sierra Leone—Copy of Communication and Instruction to Sir D. P. Chalmers.

Correspondence *re* Agreement between Government of British New Guinea and British New Guinea Syndicate.

Return Colonial Import Duties.

1899

Newfoundland: Papers relating to Contract for Sale of Government Railway, and for other purposes.

Jamaica: Papers relating to the Financial Resources of Island.

Further Correspondence relating to Affairs in Swaziland.

Bechuanaland Railway Correspondence with Mr Rhodes.

South African Republic: Papers relating to Complaints of British Subjects.

Nigeria.

Bloemfontein: Conference; Political Condition; Despatch to Secretary of State.

Malta: Report.

South African Republic: Correspondence relating to Political Reforms.

Report: Finances of Jamaica; Financial Returns as to Colonies to which it is proposed to advance Loans under the Colonial Loans Bill, 1899.

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Colonial Loans: Explanatory Note as to proposed Loans under Loans Bill, 1899.

South African Republic: Further Correspondence; Political Reforms.

Jamaica: Further Correspondence.

South Africa: Further Correspondence; Political Affairs.

South African Republic: Further Correspondence relating to Affairs.

Nigeria: Correspondence relating to Benin Territories Expedition.

West Indies: Further Correspondence relating to Hurricane.

South African Republic: Correspondence relating to Despatch of Colonial Contingents to South Africa.

1900

Further Correspondence; Affairs of South Africa.

South Australian Constitution Amendment Act, 1899.

Basutoland Report.

Correspondence with Presidents of South African Republic and Orange Free State respecting the War.

Papers relating to Federation of Australian Colonies.

Papers relating to Federated Australian Colonies.

West Indies: Jamaica Contract between Crown Agents for Colonies and Messrs Elder, Dempster, & Company for Steamship service between Jamaica and United Kingdom.

Malta: Law relating to Public Meetings.

Australian Federation: Extract from a Memorandum on Draft Australian Commonwealth Bill.

Further Correspondence: Correspondence; Affairs of South Africa.

Return South Africa Transports; Cape Colony Correspondence; Affairs of.

Report: Recent Political Situation in South Africa.

West Indies: Correspondence *re* Hurricane and Relief of Distress.

Further Correspondence; Affairs of South Africa.

1901

Correspondence: Ashanti War, 1900.

South Africa: Papers relating to Negotiations between Botha and Lord Kitchener.

South Africa: Papers relating to Negotiations between Botha and Lord Kitchener.

Statement: Colonial Loans Act.

Further Correspondence: Affairs of South Africa.

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Africa: Correspondence relating to murder of Mr Jenner and Ogaden Punitive Expedition.

Gold Coast: Laws and Regulations affecting Lands and Mines.

South Africa: Papers relating to Negotiations between Botha and Lord Kitchener.

South Africa: Number of Persons in Concentration Camps, June 1901.

Colonies: Correspondence relating to Proposed Alteration in Royal Style and Titles of Crown.

South Africa: Papers relating to certain Legislation in late South African Republic affecting Natives.

Further Correspondence relating to Political Condition of Malta.

British South African Company: Financial Statement 1899-1900, and Estimates for 1901-1902.

South Africa: Correspondence relating to Hostilities in South Africa.

South Africa: Return of Number of Persons in Concentration Camps, July 1901.

South Africa—Proclamation issued by Lord Kitchener as Administrator of Transvaal in July 1901 respecting Payments in Contracts to Purchase or Lease Land or Mining Rights.

South Africa: Correspondence Number of Persons in Concentration Camps, August 1901.

South Africa: Number of Persons in Concentration Camps, September 1901.

South Africa: Correspondence relative to Treatment of Natives by Boers.

South Africa: Further Papers relating to Working of Refugee Camps.

1902

South Africa: Further Correspondence relating to Affairs.

South Africa: Despatches from Lord Kitchener; Papers relating to Working of Refugee Camps.

South Africa: Despatches to 8th December 1901.

South Africa: Petition from Boer Prisoners in Bermuda.

Transvaal: Papers relating to Legislation affecting Natives in.

Africa: Correspondence with Netherlands Government regarding War in South Africa; Letter from General Smuts to General Botha.

South Africa: Further Correspondence *re* Treatment of Natives by Boers.

South Africa: Further Correspondence; Work of Refugee Camps.

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South Africa: Correspondence *re* proposed Additions of Territory in Natal.

South Africa: Correspondence *re* Terms of Surrender of Boers in field.

South Africa: Despatches to 8th April 1902.

Further Correspondence *re* Affairs in South Africa.

South Africa: Papers relating Interview between Secretary for Colonies and Boer Generals.

South Africa: Correspondence *re* Appeal by Boer Generals to Civilised World.

1903

Convention for Adjustment of Boundary between Canada and Alaska.

Correspondence relating to Kano.

South Africa: Further Correspondence, June 1902 to Feb. 1903.

Africa: Recruitment of Labour in British Central Africa Protectorate.

Progress of Administration in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony.

South Africa: Further Papers as to Administration in the Transvaal.

Queensland: Correspondence as to Kanaka Labour.

South Africa: Estimated Financial Position of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony.

Australia: Constitutional Relations between Australian Commonwealth and States in regard to External Affairs.

South Africa: Draft Union Customs Convention.

South Africa: Correspondence to Inter-Colonial Council.

South Africa: Correspondence *re* Indian Coolies.

Transvaal: Position of British Indians.

Trinidad: Report of Commission on Disturbances at Port of Spain.

Correspondence with Belgium and Germany as to their Commercial Relations with Great Britain and British Colonies.

Sugar Convention: Findings of the Permanent Commission and Report of the British Delegate.

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APPENDIX III

CHARTERED COMPANY'S CORRESPONDENCE

THE following are the telegrams quoted by Mr Stead and others to show that Mr Chamberlain was a party in 1895 to the conspiracy against the independence of the South African Republic:—

Dr HARRIS, London, to CHARTER, Capetown.

31st December 1895.

Inform Dr Jameson your telegram received, doing our utmost, do not think I shall fail.

HARRIS to RHODES.

Very Confidential. *2nd November* 1895.

If you cannot carry out the plan of Dr Jameson, have every reason to believe J. Chamberlain intends active policy Imperial with intention to federation British sphere of influence in his way, and he will expect you to adopt his views.

2nd November 1895.

Earl Grey held an interview with J. Chamberlain. We have seen Native chiefs decline our proposal, but we hope they will make counter proposal J. Chamberlain will put pressure upon them to settle. Fear we must increase Khama's boundary. Large breakfast to be given Khama 4th November, London. Fear speeches will damage British South Africa Company. But R. Maguire Dr Harris hold an interview with speakers to-morrow, hoping to influence these. Country press very much in favour of Khama.

2nd November 1895.

Willoughby and Khama state you had promised them land up to Panda Ma Tenka. I have been trying for Sir Charles Warren may position. Telegraph authoritative denial.

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HARRIS to CHARTER, Capetown.

2nd November 1895.

Communicate the following to Dr Jameson. I have obtained you Ikanning, and will probably get Protectorate. Can you carry out your plan or not?

HARRIS to RHODES.

2nd November 1895.

Registered address of Earl Grey is Gothical, London. You must register this on your side at once.

4th November 1895.

Your telegram of 3rd received E. Fairfield we shall see him and explain in return for transfer at once Protectorate the police are prepared to deal liberally land we have offered already if they grant now police and balance Protectorate we will leave native reserves entirely under Imperial rule for a period of years. They are native chief's wishes more than more land. Will you agree to? Have telegraphed Earl Grey must come London. You have not chosen best man to arrange with J. Chamberlain. I have already sent Flora to convince J. Chamberlain support *Times* newspaper and if you can telegraph course you wish *Times* to adopt now with regard to Transvaal Flora will act.

4th November 1895.

J. Chamberlain he does not return London until to-morrow. I have spoken open E. Fairfield, and I have accepted, if Colonial Office (they) will transfer to us balance Protectorate with police 7th November we will agree to any liberal native reserves for native chiefs also remain under Imperial rule for a period of years, and we give up railway subsidy two hundred thousand pounds last bargain E. Fairfield he does press if you cannot approve let us know about this as soon as possible by telegram. We believe E. Fairfield will carry out promises. Regret to inform you that J. Chamberlain he does continue punching Consul General Transvaal with regard to drifts E. Fairfield he is anxious Johannesburg if they take steps in precedence of.

5th November 1895.

We have seen E. Fairfield, Hon. R. H. Meade, Colonel Gould Adams, and we have agreed to what land we give native chiefs. Secretary of State for Colonies holds an interview with us to-morrow afternoon three, and after native chiefs if they are satisfied and they will be present. Secretary of

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State for Colonies he will grant British South Africa Company balance Protectorate with police. We reported your letter to A. Beit during the month of August to these and Flora we have these solid.

RHODES to HARRIS.

6th November 1895.

As to English flag they must very much misunderstand me at home. I of course would not risk everything as I am doing excepting for British flag.

8th November 1895.

I warmly thank you for your work.

HARRIS to RHODES.

8th November 1895.

See cable to acting High Commissioner from E. Fairfield releasing police and giving us balance of Protectorate are you satisfied with?

RHODES to HARRIS.

8th November 1895.

Do we get ownership on ten mile strip? I suppose we shall get land as far as to Transvaal border up to Palla, as it would be absurd to have few miles native territory between us and border.

HARRIS to RHODES.

8th November 1895.

Thanks, they do not misunderstand you, but feared if you should have power insist upon it.

11th November 1895.

Private native chiefs sailing intermediate steamer 23rd November. I am returning with Bailey and others 29th November, will it be in time reply by telegraph. Native chiefs and Willoughby acted like pigs.

11th November 1895.

Held an interview with E. Fairfield.

Telegram continues to give details as to the administration of strip of Transvaal border.

E. Fairfield he will advise any natives resident must remove to reserve in the usual way in South East Africa, therefore leaving British South Africa Company ownership clear except

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in case of foreign natives it does not affect your arrangement Linchwe Ikanning and Montsioa therefore no native administration between you and Transvaal and you are border authority.

After more details, chiefly geographical, the telegram concludes as follows:—

After consultation with E. Fairfield we have made an offer verbally as follows that we will give up £200,000 in exchange for ownership strip and ownership, balance Protectorate as far as regards three native chiefs and with the addition of public buildings and lines at Gaberones as in case of British Bechuanaland to Cape Colony, but we will pay for horses and equipment Bechuanaland Border Police at valuation not at cost price.

RHODES to HARRIS.

12th November 1895.

29th November will be in time.

12th November 1895.

I note your verbal offer, £200,000 you must have ownership land in return otherwise besides saving British Government £50,000 a year we shall have got nothing you must consider shareholders. It is humiliating to be utterly beaten by these niggers, they think more of one native at home than the whole of South Africa.

HARRIS to RHODES.

13th November 1895.

Native chiefs with Lord Loch and Temperance carried England with them and your repeated instructions to acquire police by 7th November crippled British South Africa Company terribly. Referring to your recent telegram to grant £200,000 and more if necessary to secure date of course we might have done better if we had been given more time.

RHODES to HARRIS.

15th November 1895.

High Commissioner in South Africa received this morning boundary reserve from Colonial Office you have got nothing and you have given Matabeleland to Khama. . . . There is nothing got for £200,000 excepting worthless strip along German border. Settlement is a scandal.

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HARRIS to RHODES.

18th November 1895.

Your telegram of 16th received referring to your telegram of 26th October referring to your telegram of 3rd November referring to your telegram of 5th November, we believed you considered immediate settlement securing administration railway strip with Bechuanaland Police of the utmost importance, and to be secured at any sacrifice. Referring to your telegram of 5th as to final boundary Khama reserve from which we are trying hard to exclude everything within our customs line. Do you know that Colonial Office have never yet brought our administrative line down to customs line?

19th November 1895.

In consequence of your telegram 16th November I shall withhold for the present any definite offer of £200,000 and endeavour to drift and we presume that railway strip and police sufficient for Dr Jameson plan which you telegraphed was principal object.

RHODES to HARRIS.

20th November 1895.

Your telegram of 19th received. Quite understand your difficulty but you must fight for retention country between customs line and the newly proposed boundary. . . .

22nd November 1895.

I want customs line as to £200,000 you can take high tone and let them have it Sir Hercules Robinson recommended £200,000 in the belief we would obtain whole Protectorate Bechuanaland border police . . . been handed over but they are coming down to Mafeking from different stations.

(After "police" there is a word undecipherable.)

HARRIS to RHODES.

22nd November 1895.

Held an interview with the Colonial Office will have no difficulty as to our ownership and administration of uninterrupted railway strip. . . . Having agreed to all this and given you Bechuanaland Border Police and Gaberones by date fixed by you is essential to your policy Secretary of State for the Colonies claims indemnity for subsidy forthwith and says our not doing so is breach of faith. We are writing therefore

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Secretary of State for the Colonies letter giving the £200,000 but subject to our conditions. Do you approve? Reply immediately by telegram.

RHODES to HARRIS.

23rd November 1895.

Yes you can give £200,000 we would sooner not have it as I do not wish English people to think we have made pecuniary bargain which is unfair to them I never objected to this part of agreement but I do object to being beaten by three canting natives especially on score temperance when two of them Sebele Bathoen they are known to be utter drunkards the whole thing makes me ashamed of my own people you must take legal opinion whether surrender of £200,000 affects prospectus Bechuanaland Railway Company Limited you could meet difficulty by putting £200,000 B. S. A. Company fund in English consols in the name of trustees.

23rd November 1895.

Confidential Mr Rhodes says if you like you can read to-day's cable to J. Chamberlain.

HARRIS to RHODES.

23rd November 1895.

Our long cable of 22nd November and yours 22nd November crossed. We are forwarding letter to Colonial Office accordingly.

RHODES to HARRIS.

24th November 1895.

Dr Jameson back from Johannesburg everything right my judgment is it is certainty we think A. Beit (he) must come with you 29th November on score of health you will be just in time. A. Beit to stay with me here and go up with us and the Governor. A. Beit must not consult Phillips who is all right but anxious to do everything himself and he does not wish to play second fiddle inform A. Beit he must come.

HARRIS to RHODES.

25th November 1895.

This, although marked "very confidential," solely relates to the settlement of the natives.

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RHODES to HARRIS.

25th November 1895.

See Flora and get some one to review book *Three Great African Chiefs* by Missionary Lloyd just published by Fisher Unwin.

26th November 1895.

Very confidential of course it is great pleasure to read your cable to J. Chamberlain I as near as possible warned C. J. Rhodes last week from information received know there is great danger Phillips Leonard they can or may be doing business without assistance from British South Africa Company and also independently British flag it would have serious effect on your position here I say this very confidential. You must telegraph present reply Dr Harris, Monomotapa only Dr Harris will leave 30 of this month without fail. Flora suggest 16th December celebrate Pretoria district 1880. I will try make best possible terms J. Chamberlain for £200,000 which I was compelled abandon thus could only secure English position.

29th November 1895.

We have given British South Africa Company code to Flora. She has been registered Telemones, London. Register on your side this address telegrams go direct. Keep her well informed.

MISS SHAW to RHODES.

10th December 1895.

Can you advise when will you commence the plans, we wish to send at earliest opportunity sealed instructions representative of the London Times European capitals; it is most important using their influence in your favour.

12th December 1895.

Delay dangerous sympathy now complete but will depend very much upon action before European Powers given time (to) enter a protest which as European situation considered serious might paralyze Government: general feeling in the Stock Market very suspicious.

17th December 1895.

Held an interview with Secretary Transvaal, left here on Saturday for Hague Berlin Paris fear in negotiation with these parties. Chamberlain sound in case of interference European Powers but have special reason to believe wishes you must do it immediately.

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HARRIS to SHAW.

20th December 1895.

Thanks. Are doing our best, but these things take time. Do not alarm Pretoria from London.

27th December 1895.

Everything is postponed until after 6th January. We are ready, but divisions at Johannesburg.

Strictly Confidential. *30th December* 1895.

Dr Jameson moved to assist English in Johannesburg because he received strong letter begging Dr Jameson to come signed by leading inhabitants. This letter will be telegraphed to you verbatim to-morrow. Meantime do not refer in Press. We are confident of success. Johannesburg united and strong on our side. Dissensions (they) have been stop(ped) except two or three Germans.

30th December 1895.

Following letter was received by Dr Jameson before he decided to go but if you must not use letter for Press until we cable authority, it is signed by leading inhabitants of Johannesburg.

E. SECCULL or SECRETARY to SHAW.

31st December 1895.

You can publish letter.

RHODES to SHAW.

30th December 1895.

Inform Chamberlain that I shall get through all right if he supports me, but he must not send cable like he sent to High Commissioner in South Africa. To-day the crux is, I will win, and South Africa will belong to England.
Signature of sender, F. R. Harris for C. J. Rhodes, Premier.

31st December 1895.

Unless you can make Chamberlain instruct the High Commissioner to proceed at once to Johannesburg the whole position is lost. High Commissioner would receive splendid reception, and still turn position to England advantage, but must be instructed by cable immediately. The instructions must be specific as he is weak and will take no responsibility.

Mr Stead further cites as "still more significant" a telegram

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from Mr Garrett, sent on New Year's day, to the Editor of Johannesburg *Star*, "You must expect and not misunderstand a Proclamation putting Jameson formally in the wrong. Don't let this weaken or divide you. This is merely for your information."

The argument founded on these documents is developed in "Joseph Chamberlain, Conspirator or Statesman?"—(*Review of Reviews* office).

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APPENDIX IV

THE "MISSING TELEGRAMS"

THE following is the text of the "missing telegrams" published in the *Independance Belge*:—

FAIRFIELD to HAWKSLEY.

COLONIAL OFFICE,
6th May 1896.

I can't find Mead's draft of the private assurance about the Charter, but there is Lord Selborne's version of it, and it seems to me the same thing. "The assurance is strictly private. Nothing is intended versus the Charter pending an enquiry (if any) after judicial proceedings." You are aware that Chamberlain intends to enlarge in his speech, on the advantage of development by Company to development by Government, in countries like Matabeleland. You are aware that Chamberlain wishes the announcement of an acceptance to be made by the Company, and before Friday's debate. Labby evidently does not intend to press his questions to-morrow. I don't know about John Ellis, but he will probably also not press.—Yours truly, E. FAIRFIELD.

7th May 1896.

Dear Hawksley,—Referring to my other letter of to-day, I have to say that if the Board arrives at any other decision than that of immediate acceptance of resignations and immediate publications, thereupon my letter of yesterday in which I quote the minute of Lord Selborne, is withdrawn. It is simply *nul et non avenu*. It related to a supposed state of facts which, in the event contemplated, will be non-existent.—Yours truly, E. FAIRFIELD.

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HAWKSLEY to FAIRFIELD.

30 MINCING LANE, E.C.,
22nd July 1896.

My dear Fairfield,—Is the rumour true that I hear to the effect that the Government have decided the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons to enquire into the circumstances of Jameson's action in December last? If so, I suppose it will be possible for the views of the directors to be to some extent considered in appointing some of the members? In this case may I suggest the names of Carson, Q.C., Cripps, Q.C., George Wyndham? Will it be possible to have an opportunity of discussing with you the terms of reference to the Select Committee?

BOURCHIER HAWKSLEY.

(Tel.) HAWKSLEY to BEIT.

27th July 1896.

To Beit, Prince's Chambers, Pall Mall.

Just come in and find your tel.

Have seen Bourke, Wyndham, and Fairfield. Doing all possible to secure Wyndham as well as chartered nominee. Regret impossible to call before dinner, but shall be at Burlington between eleven and twelve. HAWKSLEY.

(Tel.) HAWKSLEY to FAIRFIELD.

1st August 1896.

To Fairfield, 7 Park Place, St James.

Best thanks for note and all your trouble. Let me know any difficulties or change as to constitution of Committee. Could call this afternoon if desired.

HAWKSLEY.

(Letter) HAWKSLEY to JACKSON.

30 MINCING LANE,
2nd April 1897.

Dear Sir,—I send you memo. about Sir J. Willoughby. Will you put the points in this memo. to him, and also first paragraphs in the enclosed print. With regard to the official report, it does not seem necessary that this should be read through, but Sir John will mark certain paragraphs and read them. I am giving Mr Nicholson further prints for circulation among the Committee.

BOURCHIER F. HAWKSLEY.

To the Right Hon. W. Laiwes Jackson, M.P.

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BIGHAM to HAWKSLEY.

GOLDSMITH'S BUILDINGS, TEMPLE,
7th August 1897.

Dear Mr Hawksley,—Can Mr C. Leonard come down to the House of Commons to-morrow, at five o'clock? The Committee meets (privately) at half-past four in Colonel Legge's room, and I could see Leonard immediately after the meeting breaks up.—Yours truly, JOHN C. BIGHAM.

HAWKSLEY to FAIRFIELD.

30 MINCING LANE, E.C.,
15th June 1896.

My dear Fairfield,—Referring to your letter of the 9th, you will remember my letter to you of the 6th covering the copies of cablegrams stated. These copies were sent for confidential perusal and return. I do not think I am at liberty to assent to any use being made of the copies until I have had the opportunity of communicating with Rhodes. Shall I cable him?—Believe me, BOURCHIER F. HAWKSLEY.

HAWKSLEY to MAGUIRE.

30 MINCING LANE, E.C.,
19th February 1897.

My dear Maguire,—As far as I can trace to-night, but without exhaustive search, you and Harris cabled Rhodes 13th August 1895. Harris and Beit on 17th August. Beit cabled 26th and 28th November, and of course you will remember your telegrams 20th and 21st December. I think, but cannot be certain, that Grey and Harris both sent cable 2nd August 1895; and you remember on 4th November 1895 Grey registered his cable address "Gothical," and it was cabled to Capetown. I do not know whether, after the receipt of this cable advice, Rhodes did at any time cable direct to Grey. I need not say that very many of the cables, although sent by Harris, were settled in consultation, even if ultimately sent in the name of Harris alone. I will consider this position further against Monday. BOURCHIER F. HAWKSLEY.

HAWKSLEY to EARL GREY.

30 MINCING LANE,
20th February 1897.

My dear Grey,—Thanks for your letter of the 9th, which I read with great interest. You will, of course, have heard that

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the Committee was re-appointed, and has got to work. I send you official prints of the evidence already taken. Rhodes has done very well, and I think he will come out on top. He was nervous the first day, though his evidence was good even then. Yesterday he was simply splendid. I do not think we are by any means out of the wood, but there does seem an off-chance of the plea of public interest being recognised, and the cables of the last half of 1895, or rather the negotiations of that period, not being disclosed, though I am bound to say that, personally, I think the balance of probability is that they will have to come out. If they do Mr Chamberlain will have no one but himself to thank. I am very sorry that I have been such a bad correspondent, but really the work and anxiety of the last fifteen months or nearly two years, that is since Harris came to England on the subject of the Protectorate in July 1895, has been most trying, and I sometimes think that even my constitution will not stand it much longer, though happily I am still very well. I will try and write you more fully next time.—Believe me, BOURCHIER F. HAWKSLEY.

P.S.—Rhodes has received your letter and cable about Lowley (? Lawley).

To the Rt. Hon. Earl Grey.

(Tel.) HAWKSLEY to HARRIS.

16th February 1897.

Dr Harris, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool.

Just received your wire, which I do not understand. You and I understand and appreciate Jim better than any one else. We must not increase but allay any feeling. We can talk of this when we meet J and R this afternoon. HAWKSLEY.

(Tel.) JAMESON to HAWKSLEY.

MARGATE,
27th March 1897.

Handed in at West Post Office at 9.21 P.M. Received here 9.36 P.M.

To Hawksley, Cliftonville Hotel, Margate.

Had an hour with Johnny. He will be all right. Wyndham promises not to leave it till he succeeds. I shall be back on Tuesday morning. JAMESON.

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(Tel.) HAWKSLEY to WILLOUGHBY.

Wednesday morning, eleven o'clock,
7th April 1897.

To Sir J. Willoughby, 2 Down Street, Piccadilly.

I think you said you were coming to the city to-day. Could you and the Doctor come to me here at or after four? We ought, in anticipation of consultation to-morrow, to have strict business talk without interruption by others. I think I see way out. Please wire if you cannot both come. Shall I find you both in and alone at eleven o'clock to-night?

HAWKSLEY.

Tel. to HAWKSLEY.

FUNCHAL,
7th April 1897.

To Hawksley, London.

As to Frank's letter, all I know is that in Matabeleland he told me that in his letter to Jameson he never told him he would meet him at Krugersdorp. He said they all in Johansberg thought Jameson would get in without opposition. I sometimes think dispatch may have been tampered with, as it was everything to delay Jameson at Krugersdorp. Show this to Frank and Phillips.

Mrs R. J. CHAMBERLAIN to HAWKSLEY.

[Private.] 39 CADOGAN SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.,
No date.

Dear Mr Hawksley,—So many thanks for yours, I knew you would feel as I do, we owe Allingham a great deal, and must give the brother any (or every) help we could. I will tell him to make an appointment to come and see you one morning. He sails at the beginning of next month.

I quite agree with you that very little good, if any, can be done with J. C. now. He knows what he has to expect, and will have had plenty of time to think it over by the time C. J. R. arrives.

As long as you make it impossible for C. J. R. to give away Jameson, he will be loyal to him, but I am sure, from what I have said, that at one time Rhodes contemplated sacrificing the Doctor. The Doctor must never know this, and if any one can keep Rhodes up to the mark you can.

I want a talk with you one day about the Doctor's future to see what you think of my plan, which he already has taken kindly to.

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You do not know how grateful I am to you for all you have done for him, but I think perhaps you can partly understand how much it means to me to feel he has got a friend like you. Can I come and see you one morning about half-past one?—Yours ever sincerely, R. J. CHAMBERLAIN,
(Colonial Secretary's sister-in-law).

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY to GEORGINA, LADY DUDLEY.

[Private.] CASSIOBURY, WATFORD, HERTS,
16*th December* 1896.

Dear Lady Dudley,—The task of refusing to advise the release of these officers is one of the most distasteful ones I have had. But I have got more than my personal feelings to consider, and, of course, I hear both sides of the question, and there is another side I can assure you, hard though you may think it to realise. It would have made my Christmas happier had I seen my way to advise the release of the only two who remain after it; but I am sorry to say that I do not feel that I can do it, nor do I believe I should have the support of my colleagues if I brought the proposal before them. I have been very anxious to take this line if I could, but this is the conclusion to which I have felt myself forced. I can only ask you to believe that if I cannot comply with the wishes of yourself and other friends of theirs, it is not owing to hardness of heart, but to the belief that duty compels me otherwise. But it is very hateful to me.—Very truly, M. W. RIDLEY.

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APPENDIX V

THE BOER GENERALS' APPEAL

THE following is the text of the Appeal issued in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* on 25th September 1902 by the Boer Generals:—

(Translation.)

It will be fresh in the recollection of the World how, after an anxious struggle for their independence, lasting more than two and a half years, the Boers were at last obliged to accept the terms of surrender placed before them through the intermedium of their delegates at Vereeniging by the Government of His Britannic Majesty King Edward the Seventh.

At the same time we were deputed by these Representatives to proceed to England in order, in the first place, to make an appeal to our new Government to alleviate the awful distress which exists throughout the length and breadth of the new Colonies. Should we not be successful in this, then we were to make an appeal to the Civilised World's humanity for charitable contributions.

As we have up to the present not succeeded in inducing the British Government to grant further assistance to our people, and as the needs are indescribably great, no other course is open to us but to apply to the peoples of Europe and America.

During the critical days of struggle it was sweet to us and ours to receive continually marks of sympathy from all quarters. The financial and other aids for our wives and our children in the Concentration Camps and for the prisoners of war in all parts of the World contributed immeasurably to lighten the lot of these unhappy ones; and we take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks, in the name of the people of the late Republics, to all those who have so charitably assisted in the past. The small Boer people can never forget the help extended to them in the dark hour of their trial.

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The people of the two Republics were prepared to sacrifice everything for their independence; and now that the struggle is over they stand totally ruined. Although we have not had the opportunity of making up an exact statement of the devastation brought about in the two Republics, we are convinced from personal knowledge that during the war at least thirty thousand houses on the Boer farms, and, further, a number of villages, were burned or destroyed by the British.

Our dwellings, with the furniture, have been burned or destroyed, our orchards felled, all agricultural implements broken up, mills destroyed, every living animal driven off or killed—nothing, alas! was left to us. The land is a desert. Besides, the war has claimed many victims, and the land resounds with the weeping of helpless widows and orphans.

Moreover, we need not remind you of how much will be necessary in future for the education of the children of our Burghers.

In this great distress we now turn to the World with our appeal to help, with charitable contributions, our widows and orphans, our maimed and destitute, and to have our children properly educated.

We point to the terrible consequences of the war in order to bring our great needs to the knowledge of the World, and in no wise for the purpose of stirring up feeling again. The sword now rests in its scabbard, and all disputes are silent in the presence of such great misery.

The damage caused by the war is indescribably great, so that the small amount which England will contribute, according to the terms of surrender, would, even if multiplied tenfold, be totally insufficient to cover even the war losses.

The widows and orphans, the maimed and destitute, and our children, for whom alone we make this appeal, will, therefore, receive little, and in the most cases nothing, from this source.

All contributions will be placed to a fund to be called "The General Boer Relief Fund"; and this fund will be used exclusively now, and in the future, for the needs of those persons for whom it is collected.

We kindly request the cordial co-operation of the existing Committees in the various countries of Europe and America; and we are now on the point of visiting these countries successively in order to organise this matter properly.

LOUIS BOTHA.
C. R. DE WET.
J. H. DE LA REY.

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